

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**The Production of Early Modern Dramatic Space: Practices, Places and
Perceptions**

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by

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INTRODUCTION

i. MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

This dissertation explores the nature and development of dramatic space in early modern England. Arguing that essential to its quality and character was the early modern player's ability to produce highly creative and productive spatial textures and experiences, this dissertation examines some of the shifting attitudes to and uses of space from ca. 1516 (the date of publication of Thomas More's *Utopia*) to the first decade of the 17th century for what they reveal about the spatial economies that common playing responded to, participated in, developed and sustained. The theoretical basis for the work draws from the phenomenological philosophy of Lefebvre, de Certeau, Merleau-Ponty and Derrida – all of whom offer different but complementary ways of recognising the instrumental role of primordial experience (as opposed to the forms of intellectualised knowledge through which experience is subsequently organised and mediated) in the production of meaning. For Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, recognizing space as the product of experience is the necessary first step toward opening up the creative approaches necessary for recontextualising the past.¹ Rather than approaching the past looking for 'things' to collect and curate, Pearson and Shanks engage with it as an embodied field, wandering through it as one would a landscape, noting its various identities, instabilities and its constantly shifting textures.² Their highly spatial and spatialising approaches take account of what is lost when we engage with the past solely (or even largely) through texts (and the discourses texts sustain), and they argue for stories (plural) about the past rather than the

¹ Pearson, Mike and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

² Pearson and Shanks, pp.131-46.

production of single, dominant and authorising texts on it. Similarly, Michel de Certeau, asserting the value of the knowledge that is derived from stories, argues for a theory of narration in relation to practices and the spaces practices produce – for de Certeau, stories (plural) cannot be reduced to a single meaning, they ‘are not *about* movement, they *make* movements, not objects but effects, they transform, they do exactly what they say they do [...] they bring invisible geographies into contact with the ordered realm of the rational’ (italics original).³ In seeking to describe and account for the ephemeral and elusive nature of early modern dramatic space, this dissertation recognises the impossibility of such a task (of translating primordial experience into language). However, by taking into account some of the spatial transactions and exchanges that early modern dramatic production participated in, the story told here attempts to make visible a normally invisible geography by pointing out those logics of practice (‘the ordered realm of the rational’) through which that geography is/was produced.

The story of space that begins this dissertation is that represented in and (re-)produced through the publication of Thomas More’s *Utopia* in 1516 (which is shown to express a number of contemporary anxieties about the production of early modern social space). On the one hand *Utopia* looks back to a mythological golden age (in which social space is conceived of as stable, quantifiable and ordered), on the other hand it looks forward to more idealised possibilities. At the same time, *Utopia* (the book) participated in an emerging early modern project attempting to define and take control of the world – to

³ Crang, Mike, “Relics, Places and Unwritten Geographies in the Work of Michel de Certeau (1925-86)” in *Thinking Space*, ed. by Crang, Mike and Nigel Thrift (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.136-53 (p.150).

map it out and contain it. Nostalgic, optimistic, coercive: *Utopia* reproduces those contradictions of space that were the life blood of common playing – contradictions that common players, working predominantly from temporary stages in borrowed places, fully acknowledged and exploited to their own (and their audiences') advantage. At the other end of this dissertation's story are a number of modern ensemble productions of Shakespeare, which are considered for the insights that their fundamentally spatialised approaches and practices make available to us when considering how the experiences of early modern dramatic production might have been spatially produced through the ensemble practices of its players. Although by the end of the first decade of the 17th century dramatic performance in the metropolis was largely a settled and institutionalised practice with its own dedicated and purpose-built places of performance, this dissertation argues that common playing was still predominantly an itinerant and intuitive set of practices dependent for its success (even in the Globe and other playhouses) on those logics of practice through which players were able to respond to their various (and unpredictable) contexts of performance (through which they 'harness[-ed] the place to the play').⁴ The performances at court, in the Globe playhouse and on tour of Shakespeare's *King Lear* during and after 1605 with which this dissertation closes are approached as ensemble and collaborative endeavours. If 'the playhouse provided a site where authority [...] came to constitute itself through the workmanship, the perceived cogency, and the actual experienced appeal of signifying practice itself', this dissertation

⁴ Mackintosh, Ian, *Architecture, Actor & Audience* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p.127.

attempts to examine the basis of this perception, this experience – and argues for an approach that sees both as embodied spatial productions.⁵

Taking as its starting point Henri Lefebvre's notion that space is not a given but a temporal phenomenon actively produced in its moments of use, and de Certeau's definition of 'space [as] a practiced place', this dissertation seeks to account for the role of practices (actorly and spectatorly) and their interactions with place in the production of early modern dramatic space.⁶ Through a demonstration of how early modern playing companies worked to accommodate themselves to their places of performance, appropriating them in order to contract their audiences into playful exchanges that were collaborative and transactional in nature, the dissertation aims to provide a means of approaching the experiential nature of playing and spectating in the period – asserting an authority for the role of ephemeral experience in the spatial discourses we construct. Although not denying the fundamental differences between the experience of playing and spectating in a range of borrowed sites and the experience of playing and spectating in the purpose built playhouses (let alone the differences between playing and spectating in 1516 and playing and spectating in 1611), this dissertation explores what these experiences might have had in common (rather than what set them apart) – and how the latter might have evolved out of the former. Arguing that the ensemble practices of the early modern players included a tactical disposition that was not limited to or solely defined by the place of performance (enabling players to remain sensitive and responsive

⁵ Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.48.

⁶ Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.26-7. De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p.117.

to the unique opportunities provided by particular audiences and contexts for intensifying the audience's experience), this dissertation seeks to define those stage logics that underpinned these practices – practices which were able both to communicate characters, themes and ideas while, at the same time, heightening the audience's sense of complicity and pleasure.

ii. SPATIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

A common thread running through much 20th century spatial theory is the idea that space is something that is primarily experienced rather than seen, and is best defined not by its formal, quantifiable and measurable properties (i.e. that which presents itself to the eye) but by how it relates to those who make use of it (i.e. the qualities and experiences it generates and through which it is apprehended and perceived). Lefebvre reconciles what are conventionally treated as separate entities (*'physical space (nature), mental space (formal abstractions about space) and social space (the space of human action and conflict and "sensory phenomena")*) in an attempt to provide not another 'discourse *on* space' but a means of grasping the significance of space as something dynamic and alive, a temporal phenomenon resistant to the totalising and authorising tendencies of discursive knowledge.⁷ De Certeau, critical of how experiences and the types of everyday knowledge that they make available to us are transformed (the practices through which they are produced erased) by the written word, draws attention to the epistemological work done by positing a division between theory and practice (a division which denies legitimacy to

⁷ Merrifield, Andy, "Henri Lefebvre: a Socialist in Space" in Crang and Thrift, pp.167-82 (p.171). The relationships between the experience of space and its conceptualising through a conventional privileging of language are discussed in Lefebvre, pp.16-8.

the sorts of knowledge available through practices, and which subjugates these to the knowledge derived from discursive logics).⁸ Noting that scriptural practice is a form of control that has acquired a mythical value, de Certeau argues that we fail to see it as an imposition, the substitution of one thing (language) for another (experience).⁹ For Lefebvre, 'representations of space' is the dominant space of any modern society precisely because it is conceptualised space (produced, reproduced and reproduce-able through language – 'tied to the relations of production and to the "order" which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to "frontal" relations') – which accounts for a very different space to that which is perceived (spatial practice) and lived (representational space).¹⁰ Kandis Cook's account of her design realisation for the 1998 Shakespeare's Globe production of Thomas Middleton's 1605 comedy *A Mad World my Masters* offers a representative example of how conceptualised readings of the stage privilege production over use, and how this erases the consideration of space as an experiential phenomenon variously perceived (rather than observed) by its users in the shifting contexts of its production:

Rather than fight the stage space, with its pillars, palatial ceiling and background of doors, discovery space and upper balcony, it seemed we should embrace this opulence of colour and symbolic imagery, energy and the pure meaning of the place. This we did by taking the colours and knitting the threads into the action of this cynical and darkly humorous story. It is a story of a furiously changing society, giving opportunity to whoever could think fast enough to clamber out of their present status – or lack of it – and elevate themselves to the next rung, if not higher.¹¹

⁸ De Certeau, pp.159-62.

⁹ De Certeau, pp.133-39.

¹⁰ Lefebvre, p.33.

¹¹ Burnett, Kate, and Peter Ruthven Hall, *Make Space! Design for Theatre and Alternative Spaces* (London: The Society of British Theatre Designers, 1994), p.66.

Cook focuses on the stage, and it is the stage's formal properties (those elements that present themselves to the eye) that define the space for her– 'its pillars, palatial ceiling, background of doors, discovery space [...] upper balcony'. Standing somewhere in the auditorium, looking onto the stage, she assumes that the performance space is the physical space of the stage as it is viewed from the auditorium. Her observational reading of the stage is coupled to a literary, thematic reading of the playtext; neatly melding word and image together, the two mutually re-enforce each other in language that authorises the production – the practices of the actors who use the place and produce the space, and the responses of its various audiences (how they might experience and contribute to the production), are not considered as essential, constitutive elements of spatial production.

In calling for an approach that accounts for the role of experience in the production of space, de Certeau reacts against an epistemic practice and convention that assumes observation as the basis of all legitimate truth claims, and articulates a notion of space as the product of the interactions between a place and the practices of its users.¹² In drawing a distinction between 'strategies' and 'tactics', de Certeau distinguishes between two different ways of behaving in relation to place, productive of two different types (or qualities) of space – each a consequence of how a place is engaged with (or practiced on) by its users. These modes of behaviour de Certeau relates to two social groups: those able to organise and wield power strategically over others, and those whose lives are organised by those strategies – whose options are either to engage with and conform to the logics of place strategically determined by others, or to resist these logics by operating

¹² Crang, Mike, "Relics, Places and Unwritten Geographies in the Work of Michel de Certeau (1925-86)" in Crang and Thrift, pp.136-53 (p.140).

on a more pragmatic and individualistic level (seizing opportunities, manipulating events for immediate advantage, turning to their own ends forces that are alien to them – in short, deploying a tactics of everyday life in order to get away with things).¹³ Strategies are, for de Certeau, always linked to power and to the place which power carves out for itself (the place then acts as power's stronghold, from where it can look down, organise and establish society's overarching structures).¹⁴ Arguing that those who exercise power do so strategically in order to consolidate their position (manipulating and re-creating according to their own needs and desires), de Certeau demonstrates the political purpose of strategic behaviour – which is to sustain the productive economies that are the source of their power. Place is thus central to their project: the ability to produce places is what gives expert knowledge its validity and privilege, its exponents their expertise and privileged authority.

In the discussions that follow, place is viewed as a strategic operation with its own predetermined logic and purpose – whether that place is a temporary stage in a town square or guildhall, or a permanent thrust stage in a purpose built playhouse. In either case, the place of performance has been calculated and constructed deliberately to authorise the performances it will enable, and to facilitate the practices that will make use of the place and produce the spaces of performance. Practices, however, follow a different logic to that of place; how a place of performance is engaged with and manipulated by its users is a matter of practices, which will either conform to the logics of place or resist and (playfully) work against them – this dissertation argues that the

¹³ De Certeau, pp.xx & 29-44.

¹⁴ De Certeau, pp.35-6.

practices of early modern players were more tactical than strategic, and it was this quality that enabled them to create highly productive and pleasurable interactions between themselves, places and spectators. Pre-dating modern concerns for verisimilitude and the need to provide dramatic action with a specific sense of historical time and geographical locale, common playing deployed and exploited those stage logics through which the players were able to effect meaningful and pleasurable relationships between the time and place of the dramatic action with the time and place of the performance. The conventional distinction between ‘the world of the play’ and ‘playing in the world’ is problematised throughout this dissertation (especially in chapters 3 and 4); the unitary notion of performance space this dissertation argues for is precisely not one that needs to accommodate shifts between two (or more) separate and distinct worlds – rather it is a space in which the lived experience of the time and place of performance is brought to bear on the time and place of the stage action, intensifying the experience of that action and weaving it into a complex spatial texture.

The dissertation goes on to explore some of the practices available to the early modern player (and modern ensemble actors and directors), noting their underlying and non-discursive logics. Noting also the capacity of these practices to respond in the moment to the opportunities provided by the unique, shifting, circumstances of performance for exploiting and nuancing the stage/audience dynamic, the dissertation describes the tactical nature of these practices. If, for de Certeau, strategies are always connected to a space that power has constructed for itself, tactics happen in someone else’s space – in a place that is alien to them. Defined more by time than place, tactics are the *modus*

operandi of those whose need is to make do with society's products, converting them to their purposes by intervening in the highly structured logics society imposes. Though tactics happen within the overarching structures established by society's productive economies, they are not defined by them (we might say that tactics are best defined in opposition to those economies). Tactics make use of the elements of dominant/-dominating economies, but they do so according to their own needs and desires – communicating an internal logic that cannot be contained by the strategies of society's producers and their systems: 'strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose [their] spaces [...] whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces'.¹⁵ The ability of the early modern player to respond in the moment to the broader contexts of performance, to take advantage of the opportunities presented for audience engagement and estrangement, denotes a tactical disposition – one which did not weaken the intensity of the dramatic experience, but rather heightened it. In a broader sense, tactics are spatial practices that, in structuring everyday reality, relate spaces within a wider set of social and cultural networks – in the contexts of early modern dramatic production (as also in the contexts of those modern ensemble approaches considered in chapter 4), tactics are the means by which players harnessed not just the place but also the time and the world of which the play was part to the needs of performance itself.

For de Certeau, strategic space is 'always a space which is *conceived*, and invariably ideology, power and knowledge are embedded in this representation' (italics original), a primary characteristic of tactical space is that it is a space encountered and perceived in

¹⁵ de Certeau, p.30.

its moment of production, rather than planned for and conceived.¹⁶ The identification of strategies and tactics as modes of behaviour producing different types of space has its corollary in Lefebvre's distinction between dominant/dominating space and appropriated space.¹⁷ Lefebvre describes dominant/dominating space as conceptualised space, strategically conceived it 'is a space transformed, and mediated by technology [...] its origins lie in political power [...] invariably the product of a master's project'.¹⁸ By contrast, appropriated space is that which comes about through the activities (de Certeau would say 'tactics') of its users; a pre-existing space 'modified to serve the needs and possibilities of a group', appropriated space is a more elusive product as 'it is not always easy to decide in what respect, how, by whom and for whom [it has] been appropriated'.¹⁹ Existing for the immediate benefit of its users/producers in order to meet their current needs, appropriated space is produced tactically rather than strategically. Even after the emergence of the London playhouses towards the end of the 16th century, dramatic space was still invariably borrowed space – a place converted, deflected from its normal purposes to accommodate the needs of players and their audiences. Not only did this require a tactical response from the players towards their places of performance (through which they accommodated themselves and their production to the peculiar demands and possibilities offered by each strategically determined time and place), common playing (as opposed to, say, academic playing or the public performances of religious plays) required the deployment of a similarly tactical disposition in the service of a performance tradition that engaged and implicated its audiences in its construction.

¹⁶ Merrifield, Andy, "Henri Lefebvre: a Socialist in Space" in Crang and Thrift, pp.167-82 (p.174).

¹⁷ Lefebvre, pp.164-68.

¹⁸ Lefebvre, pp.164-65.

¹⁹ Lefebvre, p.165.

Merleau-Ponty articulates similar concerns to those of Lefebvre and de Certeau about assuming a stable (even necessary) relationship between space and language, and offers an embodied notion of space as an elusive and unstable entity whose production depends on the manner of the engagement between the body and the world of which the body is part – the ‘translation’ (de Certeau) of which encounter into language erases the awareness of the originating practices through which that encounter and that space came about (through which space accrues its primary significances) and asserts a congruence between discursive logic and the logic of the space language describes. Merleau-Ponty points to the errors of judgement we make about space when our primordial and embodied experience of it is replaced by one proceeding through the re-inscription of that experience as it is subsequently apprehended by the intellect. Arguing that philosophising about perception necessarily engages one in transforming and reconstituting that perception (so that we end up with something very different from the embodied experience we started out with) Merleau-Ponty writes:

We cannot subject our perception of the world to philosophical scrutiny without ceasing to be identified with that act of positing the world, with that interest in it that delimits us, drawing us back from our commitment which is itself thus made to appear as a spectacle, without passing from the *fact* of our existence to its *nature*.²⁰

For Merleau-Ponty, lived experience of the world is the primordial level of perception (one which precedes intellectual descriptions and scientific explanations); so, an adequate phenomenological perception of the world must begin with the body – for ‘my flesh is of a piece with that of both things and other persons [...] “the presence of the world is

²⁰ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1962), p.xvi.

precisely the presence of its flesh to my flesh”’.²¹ From such a phenomenological stance, apprehending the meaning of space requires a recognition of the ways by which it is encountered (as opposed to how it is observed) – it is not, therefore, possible to speak of a phenomenological perception of space without taking into account one’s role, position and practices in relation to the space and how these determine the space itself. Again, it is not simply that language is a transformation (or translation) of one thing into another, Merleau-Ponty makes clear that language can offer only a third-person way of perceiving the world anyway – which is then privileged over and above the direct experience of the world as it was originally encountered.²² Language, according to Merleau-Ponty, in claiming a primary legitimacy for itself effaces what it sees as the ephemeral and less substantial (and therefore less real) claims of the directly lived experience on which it draws.²³ Pointing out that the distinctions we draw between different sensory experiences (touch, sight, hearing, etc.) are the consequence of a science of the body, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates how our primordial perception knows no such distinction – it comes to us before the categories through which we have been trained to think order, define and articulate this perception back to us (the resultant text, in turn, coming to erase and stand for this lived experience). One of the issues that this dissertation engages with (especially in chapter 4) are the problematics of those interpretive modes which (like Kandis Cook’s account of the space of *A Mad World My Masters*) assume a privileged authority for observational readings of space, and those which (like Pauline Kiernan, Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa’s discussion of 3D-staging on the early modern stage) fail to take account

²¹ Cutrofello, Andrew, *Continental Philosophy: a Contemporary Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p.77.

²² Cutrofello, pp.73-4.

²³ Cutrofello, p.74.

of the nature of the spaces they describe as productive encounters – between players *and* between players and spectators.

Spectators experience more than they can see, and more than can be put into words. Accounting for experience through a reading of the seen will always be a transformation of one thing into another – of absence into presence (producing a text that stands for what is not available to be reclaimed). Derrida argues that *différance* exists precisely in this space, it is not *in* anything, only between things – never able to be exposed because it is never there to be exposed, to become present.²⁴ This awareness, that we can only show what is available to be shown, is helpful in terms of attempting to recover a theatrical past: for the act of translating past experience into present text/discourse necessarily points to the impossibility of reclaiming an experience that is neither here, there or anywhere to be reclaimed. Between primordial experience and the intellect lies an absence, that of the time and space that generated and shaped the original – and just as one can never inhabit the same space twice, one can never have the same experience twice. Reading signs and looking for significations denotes a tendency to go by what is present rather than what is absent.²⁵ By focussing on what is generally absent in discourses on early modern performance space (the experiences and the practices of the spectators and players who produced it) this dissertation offers an alternative strategy for noting what has been generally erased from theatrical discourses – and makes visible how

²⁴ Kearney, Richard and Mara Rainwater, eds., *The Continental Philosophy Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.457.

²⁵ David Roberts notes that ‘one of theatre criticism’s most enduring and persuasive stylistic features is a pervasive reliance on the present tense’ which, in ‘casting productions in an imaginary present’, sustains a scriptural tradition that erases the awareness of the absence of which it (ultimately) speaks, [Roberts, David, “Shakespeare, Theater Criticism, and the Acting Tradition” in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53:3 (Autumn 2002) 341-61 (p.349)].

the exclusion of experience from those discourses relates to the broader scriptural economies within which theatre operates.²⁶

Michael Shanks, recognising that ‘the past is not somehow “discovered” in its remains’, echoes Derrida’s assertion that what is absent is not available to be brought into the present.²⁷ The presence of material objects creates absences, and it is into these that we pour our responses to those objects – a discourse coming to stand for and replace what is not present. If archaeology ‘is the relationship we maintain with the past [...] a work of mediation with the past’, then this dissertation offers a similarly mediatorial engagement with that past. The past does not exist independently of something we call the present, nor is it reclaimable through an inspection of that which presents itself to the eye (objects, texts, buildings, the discursive logics derived from and sustained by them). If the past can only be conceived of in terms of its relations and interactions with the present, then the discourses we produce must take account of the partiality of modern discursive knowledge. This dissertation suggests an alternative approach to the past, one that accounts for what is absent, of what is erased by discursive epistemologies that privilege objects and texts over practices. For Shanks, the relationship between past and present is not linear but turbulent; the contexts and ways of knowing that form our present are

²⁶ A contemporary example illustrates a tendency to view theatrical production as a matter of what is done, rather than how what is done is encountered and perceived: ‘I Hate Nothing More Than Art and Culture’ was the headline to an article in *the Guardian*, which continued: ‘What question would leading theatre-makers put to Peter Brook? We asked them, then asked him to respond. Michael Billington introduces the results’. The theatre-makers in question were four directors, one playwright/director, two playwrights, one playwright/actor and one actor, their responses mediated to the reader by the one expert critic – theatre makers are clearly those who do it (which does not include those who encounter and experience it), [*the Guardian*, June 8, 2005].

²⁷ Pearson and Shanks, p.11.

instrumental to how we make sense of the past.²⁸ If space is a temporal and experiential phenomenon, then the lost spaces of early modern drama are only knowable to us in so far as we take account of the spatial economies we participate in and construct now. Noting what is both gained and lost to us by a tendency to privilege discursive knowledge over and above the knowledge of practices in the production and experience of space will go some way to helping us re-imagine and re-contextualise those past spaces. Acknowledging the past spaces of dramatic performance as the product of practices and the generators of experiences, and noting the underlying logics and knowledges this makes available to us (for example, through examining the practices and experiences of contemporary actors, directors and spectators), offers not only an alternative to modern discursive approaches (with their focus on the observation of that which can be read), it also offers an approach that, in engaging with conjecture and the imagination, opens the door to ways of knowing other than those determined by the disciplines of modern scriptural economies.

Beginning with a study of the relationship between vagrancy, idleness and common playing in the 16th century, this dissertation argues that it was the appropriating nature of all three in relation to space that caused them to be conflated by some into a single entity – common playing's borrowing and transgressive uses of other people's places being perceived as antagonistic to a dominating spatial economy increasingly characterised as ordered and permanent. This appropriating quality was a matter of practices, what was done to and with a place produced an unstable and unpredictable space that dramatic

²⁸ Pearson and Shanks, p.10.

performance could fully exploit and delight in – some of the logics of practice available to the early modern player, enabling him to appropriate his place of performance, are explored in chapter 2. As another set of spatial practices, cozenage had much in common with common playing – both appropriated pre-existent places, deflected them from their normal purposes and did so for the material advantage of their practitioners. Theatre’s fascination with cozenage is explored in chapter 3 for what it reveals about the common sets of practices, pleasures and anxieties associated with both – especially when those vicarious pleasures available through reading about cozenage and cozeners in the rogue literature found their corollary in the ability to watch characters being cozened on stage and to take pleasure in being implicated in the construction of that cozenage. Chapter 4 examines the logics of practice involved in modern ensemble approaches to the performance of Shakespeare. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is approached as a play conceived for ensemble playing and the deployment of highly flexible stage practices through which performers were able to respond to their immediate contexts of performance in order to maximise theatrical effect and intensify audience experience. The 1608 Quarto version of *King Lear*, unfettered by the later Folio’s structural organisation into acts and scenes, is examined for what it reveals of a fluid and evolving spatiality – one which suggests a concern for spatial quality rather than a sense of locale.

Finally, this dissertation suggests that the emergence of the playhouse as the dominant site of public dramatic performance in the capital was not so much a radical move away from the appropriating practices of an older, medieval stagecraft, rather it marked a nodal point along an increasingly well defined spatial trajectory for dramatic performance in the

period. As it evolved through the 16th century, the ability of dramatic performance to borrow and appropriate places and turn them into immediate, productive and creative sites of engagement and entertainment coincided with the unprecedented expansion of urban London. Though the associations between playing companies and purpose-built places of performance foregrounded practices that had previously been backgrounded and anonymous, the success of these playhouses continued to depend on the capacity of players to exploit the opportunities offered by buildings and audiences, and to respond with ingenuity and intelligence to the shifts in spatial textures as they revealed themselves in the moments of dramatic production.

CHAPTER 1

IDLENESS, VAGRANCY AND COMMON PLAYING: THE PRACTICES OF APPROPRIATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores vagrancy in the early modern period as a set of spatial practices, tactical and appropriating in nature, anxieties about which increasingly shaped a notion of idleness as any seemingly unproductive work. Thomas More's *Utopia*, the anti-vagrancy legislation of the period, homiletic material, biblical expositions and numerous early modern plays reveal a range of anxieties about the production of a social and cultural space deemed threatening precisely because it came about through what was perceived of as unproductive activity. Through an exploration of some of the spatial anxieties of the 16th century, this chapter notes that though common playing became increasingly associated with specific perceptions and conceptions of idleness, in performance common playing also revealed idleness as spatially and theatrically productive. Early modern notions of idleness and common playing are explored in this chapter for what they reveal about how dramatic spaces were produced and experienced in the period; the chapter goes on to argue that the spatial production of common playing was tactical and appropriating in nature – and it was this that caused common playing to be seen increasingly as a transgressive activity.

1.2 ENCLOSURE, IDLENESS AND VAGRANCY

This section looks at Thomas More's *Utopia* and argues that its conception of Utopia (the place) is founded on a set of beliefs and assumptions about the social and spatial practices

through which it is constituted – beliefs and assumptions which, this chapter goes on to argue, are shaped by those distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate practices that were similarly brought to bear on the practices of common playing. Stephen Greenblatt sees *Utopia* as embodying a number of contradictions relating to aspects of More's own life – on the one hand *Utopia* (through the character of Richard Hythlodæus) represents 'the perfect expression of [More's] self-conscious role-playing', on the other hand (through the relationship with the "More" who appears in the work as both presenter (or recorder) and character') *Utopia* represents More's own incompleteness (and so offers 'an intense meditation upon [the] limitations [of the role More constructed for himself in real life]').²⁹ *Utopia* is 'the work of a man tied in a hundred ways to his particular time and place', and it is this locatedness at the heart of a society increasingly concerned to identify places with practices and to define what constituted legitimate space (and to control the conditions for its production) that makes *Utopia* such a useful text for this dissertation: for *Utopia* reveals the contradictions and disjunctures between an idealised conception of social and cultural space and the perceived reality in contemporary life.³⁰ *Utopia* articulates those anxieties that would grow throughout the 16th century about the practices and spatial production of those whose activities had previously been largely uncontrolled, unlicensed and undefined by specific places.

Arthur Kinney argues that though much has been written on the effects of enclosure in the 16th century, the underlying assumption is invariably that it was a direct cause of

²⁹ Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.33.

³⁰ *ibid.*

misery and vagabondage.³¹ This conflation is exemplified by More's *Utopia* (first published in 1516):

Sheep [...] consume, destroy and devour whole fields, houses, and cities [leaving] no ground for tillage; they enclose all into pastures; they throw down houses; they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing but only the church to be made a sheep-house [...] the husbandmen be thrust out of their own [...] Away they trudge, I say, out of their known and accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in [...] And when they have wandered abroad till that be spent, what can they then else do but steal, and then justly pardy or be hanged, or else go about a-begging?³²

More condemns the increasing monopolisation of wealth, relates it to the 'dearth of victuals [and] the decay of housekeeping, whereof ensueth beggary and theft' and argues against the notion that it advantages the monarch to keep his subjects poor – for poverty is always attended by idleness, and is a primary cause of discontent, lawlessness and revolt:

For where shall a man find more wrangling, quarrelling, brawling, and chiding than among beggars? Who be more desirous of new mutations and alterations than they that be not content with the present state of their life? Or, finally, who be bolder stomached to bring all in a hurly-burly [...] than they that have now nothing to lose?³³

Citing 'the hardy and courageous Fabricis' who 'had rather be a ruler of rich men than be rich himself', More's overall defence of a commonweal based on a principle of universal economic well-being is (as Book Two of *Utopia* reveals) really an argument about the nature of government and the application of power.³⁴ *Utopia* is not a place defined by new social and economic possibilities for its less worthy inhabitants (founded on a new conception of politics), rather a system of management – the best application of state

³¹ Kinney, Arthur F., *Rogues, Vagabonds & Sturdy Beggars: a New Gallery of Tudor and Early Stuart Rogue Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp.19-21.

³² More, Thomas, "Utopia" in *Three Early Modern Utopias: Utopia, New Atlantis, The Isle of Pines*, ed. by Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.1-133 (pp.22-3, 39).

³³ Bruce, p.39.

³⁴ *ibid.*

control through a conventional (i.e. privileged, centralised and patriarchal) structure. It may be a place of equitably distributed wealth ('all things being there in common'), but it is '*every man* [that] hath abundance of everything' (my italics), and that within a strictly hierarchical, socio-economic structure decided by 'the manners of the rulers and magistrates' upon whom 'the public weal doth depend'.³⁵ Utopia, as an economic collective, is founded on a new model of shared ownership, but its wealth is still the product of a labour which is both centrally organised and centrally controlled.³⁶ Like a well-made play, Utopia is founded on a philosophy which 'knoweth [...] her own stage, and thereafter, ordering and behaving herself in the play that she hath in hand, playeth her part accordingly, with comeliness, uttering nothing out of due order and fashion'.³⁷

More's theatrical analogy between good government and a good play betrays a highly subjective determination as to what constitutes good and an uncritical acceptance that there are those born to write the script, others to play the part allocated to them – who, even if they can think of a better part are not to enact it, but are to play their allotted part as best they can 'and that which you cannot turn to good, so to order it that it be not very bad'.³⁸ More draws on a didactic and authoritative model of theatre, his stage is not the flexible stage of public entertainment, nor the appropriated stage spaces of town halls and aristocratic banqueting halls, rather a philosophical and discursive space which

³⁵ Bruce, pp.44 & 95.

³⁶ Bristol, Michael, *Carnival & the Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York & London: Methuen, 1985), pp.90-3.

³⁷ Bruce, p.41.

³⁸ Bruce, p.41-2.

‘privileg[-ed] the spoken language [...] as a vessel of foremost authority’.³⁹ More’s ideal script is one characterised by ‘comeliness [...] nothing out of due order and fashion’, creating the same unity of effect and purpose that was to be found in poetry.⁴⁰ ‘Good’, in this context, relates to the potential of drama as a form of poetic discourse in the service of political power and conducive to the moral health of the nation.⁴¹ Robert Weimann notes how in Renaissance England ‘the humanist claim for writerly authority was virtually undisputed’; just as Sir Philip Sidney argued for the supremacy of poetry over philosophy (since philosophy was ‘thought to hold forth “by precept”, poetry “by example”’ and so richer in its capacity to ‘[couple] the general notion with the particular example’), so More’s narrator appeals to a model of drama as a form of elementary philosophy ‘favourable to “discovery” and the public impact of new ideas’.⁴² Reinforcing the relationship between spoken language and moral virtue (as if poetry led to political stability), More identifies educated, discursive space as the legitimate ground for political thought and social practice and asserts a validity for the claims of poetic language and an authority for those who produce philosophical discourse through it. *Utopia* claims an authority for language and ‘the idea of the author’, rather than the dramatic productivity of common playing.⁴³

³⁹ Weimann, Robert, *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996a), p.108.

⁴⁰ Bruce, p.42.

⁴¹ Stephen Greenblatt argues that More’s self-fashioning was itself a highly self-conscious mode of theatricality; More’s predilection for theatrical analogies was thus an extension and expression of a tendency to see his life as a mode of performance wherein he ‘had long conditioned himself [...] to ask himself on all public occasions “What would ‘More’ say about this?”’ [Greenblatt, 1980 (p.71)].

⁴² Weimann, 1996a (pp.107-08)) – the quotation by Sidney is taken from Sidney, Philip, *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerate (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912) 3:13. Riggs, David, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber & Faber, 2004), p.86.

⁴³ Weimann, 1996a (p.109). Weimann goes on to note some of the implications for this authority when it was challenged by an increasingly confident theatrical discourse in which ‘the verbal and political parameters of authority could be viewed ironically as well as strategically’ [p.110].

With its roots in the humanist, academic curricula of schools, colleges and universities, *Utopia* appeals to a form of drama aimed at satisfying young minds and enabling youth ‘with better profit [to] become better accustomed to proper action and pronunciation’.⁴⁴ Increasingly encouraged (and, in many instances, enforced) in places of learning throughout the sixteenth century, it was a mode of performance in marked contrast to the dramatic representations of popular entertainment – which scholars, from the mid-15th century, had been banned from visiting (to the extent that ‘university authorities [had] generally succeeded by at least the 1580s in preventing commercial players from invading a five-mile radius with anything that might “hinder the quiet of the Vniuersitie, and drawe our Studentes from their bookes”’).⁴⁵ How effective this was in preventing actual contact between students and common playing is, of course, debatable; that stipulations were necessary suggests that contact between the two was always a possibility (if not a reality).⁴⁶ Preventing playing companies from performing in the cities, banning ‘fellows and scholars from attending taverns, shows, and other shameful places’, were measures more likely to limit than prevent contact between students and common playing (Stephen Gosson complained in 1579 that it was not only players who ‘follow the humour of their own fancies, and youthful delights [but also] students of the universities, and the Inns of Court’).⁴⁷ More’s academic drama, by contrast, was not only instructive: by bringing ‘moral virtue to rhetorical life’ it situated its audience ‘in the role of jurors’ – if acting developed ‘skills in oratory and gesture’ and prepared the individual for ‘every area of

⁴⁴ From the 1561 statutes of St. Peter’s College Westminster, quoted in Knapp, Robert. S., “The Academic Drama” in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp.257-65 (p.258).

⁴⁵ Kinney, 2002 (p.258).

⁴⁶ Riggs, p.94.

⁴⁷ Kinney, 2002 (p.258). Gosson, Stephen, “Plays Confuted in Five Actions” in Hazlitt, W. C., *The English Drama and Stage 1543-1664* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1869), p.187.

early modern social and political life', spectating prepared one for a life of engagement with and respect for poetic language, rhetorical argumentation and strategically produced space.⁴⁸ When in his *History of Richard III* More 'compared the pretences of princely politics with stage plays [...] he described a situation in which the actors inhabited an exclusive world, and the common man stepped onto the stage at his own peril: "And so they said that these matters be Kings' games, as it were stage plays, and for the more part played upon scaffolds. In which poor men be but the lookers on. And they that wise be, will meddle no further"". ⁴⁹ It is little wonder that academic drama should provide such a pervasive model for More's conception of the ideal (and exclusive) society.

Book Two of *Utopia* offers a detailed description of Utopia the place – an ordered and regulated society in which 'no man sit idle, but [...] every one apply his own craft with earnest diligence.'⁵⁰ A daily regime of 6 hours work before noon, dinner, 2 hours rest, 3 further hours of work, supper, bedtime at 8 o'clock followed by 8 hours sleep, ensures that every hour can be accounted for – 'All the void time that is between the hours of work, sleep, and meat, that they be suffered to bestow, every man as he liketh best himself'.⁵¹ The assertion that this is not so much to deny Utopians the potential to 'mispend this time in riot or slothfulness' as to apply it 'well and thriftily upon some other science as shall please them' would seem to be a rhetorical device – enabling More to endorse a regime in which there is no free time, where there is a daily diet of state-

⁴⁸ Kinney, 2002 (p.261).

⁴⁹ Walker, Greg, "The Renaissance in Britain" in *The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603 (Short Oxford History of the British Isles)* ed. by Collinson, Patrick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.144-87 (pp.155-56).

⁵⁰ Bruce, pp.93 & 57.

⁵¹ Bruce, p.58.

sponsored lectures for the workers, an hour's 'play' ('music, or else [...] honest and wholesome communication') and where 'Dice-play and such other foolish and pernicious games they know not'.⁵² Utopia is a place where idleness is an impossibility.⁵³

The relationship between the notion of idleness as unproductive activity and disorder that runs through *Utopia* was a popular theme of early modern interludes – and it is to two of these that this chapter now turns (noting how their vilification of idleness was communicated through a medium, dramatic performance, whose common form was increasingly being associated with the same). In the 1560 'preaty interlude called, Nice wanton...', idleness in children is blamed for their later inclination towards evil – the message to parents (to whom the prologue addresses itself), and especially mothers, is clear: fault in wanton children lies in their parents '[who] did tidle me, they were to blame, In steade of correction, in yll did me maintain'.⁵⁴ At the play's end, Barnabas summarises its moral purpose – which is to demonstrate 'How daungerous it is, for the frailtye of youth, Without good gouernaunce, to lyue at libertye'.⁵⁵ Asserting that idleness and play prevent learning, lead to a life of 'outrage' and a growth in 'mischief and yll', Barnabas appeals to his audience not to be negligent in chastising children, but to 'worke

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ For a discussion of *Utopia*'s conservative appeal to 'an assumed public of humanist intellectuals stretching throughout Europe' happy to condemn the covetousness of landlords but without arguing for a change in the 'social distinctions which separated labourers from landowners' see McRae, Andrew, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.24-6.

⁵⁴ Anon, *A preaty interlude called, Nice wanton [Imprinted at London: in Paules Church yearde, at the singe of the Swane by John Kyng] Anno Domini. M.D.LX. [1560]*. (British Library, STC (2nd ed.) / 25016, Greg, I, 31(a) MSS, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fullrec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99837899&-FILE=../session/1248684403_11180&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&ECCO=N&DISPLAY=AUTHOR> [accessed 27 July 2009].

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

them like waxe to your own entent [else] if ye suffer them longe to liue in outrage they wil be sturdy and stiffe, and will not relent'.⁵⁶

The Triall of Treasure (1567) is an equally didactic drama whose 'Author desireth your gentle acceptation' regarding the futility of lusting after wealth: 'For where as wealth wanteth idlenes doth sla[ke] But where idlenes is Lust parteth the slake' (in other words, wealth breeds desire and longing (lust), and where lust is there you will find idleness – for lust incapacitates, it cools the desire (or the recognition of the need) to work).⁵⁷ Articulated by both plays is the message that idleness is a sin and that no amount of correction is too much to counter its capacity to destroy – the moral force of the argument being exemplified through practices whose claims for authority reside not simply in the didactic message of the play but in its demonstration through performance: what audiences saw, played before them, was the visible and embodied reality of productive work, the fruit of a commitment to learning and a turning away from idleness. Time, at the end of the interlude, could, in all honesty, say to his audience that the players had 'shewed the Consolation and gaine, That the luste shall receiue that iustly doe raigne'.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Anon, A new and mery enterlude, called the triall of treasure newly set forth, and neuer before this tyme imprinted. The names of the plaiers, first, Sturdines, Contentation, Visitation, Time. The second, Lust, Sapience, Consolation. The thirde, the Preface, Just, Pleasure, Gredy Gutte. The fourth, Elation, Trust, a woman, and Treasure, a woman. The fifth, Inclination the vice. [Imprinted at Londo[n] in Paules Churcheyarde, at the signe of the Lucrece by Thomas Purfoote 1567]. British Library STC (2nd ed.) / 24271 Greg I, 49. Sig A-D4 E6. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99853742&FILE=../session/1248684490_11400&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&ECCO=undefined&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=default> [accessed 27 July 2009].

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

Inveighing against idleness was a popular theme in other areas of early modern performance, including sermons and acts of daily meditation.⁵⁹ Thomas Cooper's 1572 Old Testament expositions provide a rich vein of hermeneutical advice for clergy seeking better to 'helpe and instruction the unlearned'.⁶⁰ Idleness is a favourite theme, fulminations against it being drawn from scripture to show how it leads to corruption, hindering 'men from all Godliness, or [make] them more subject to the temptations of the Devil.'⁶¹ Cooper's conflation of idleness, disease and playfulness echoes that of *Nice Wanton*, and articulates a conception that would later run through much anti-theatrical polemic, that as

the rain and snow commeth down from heaven, not to be as an idle spectacle, or to return up into the air again without use or profit, but to moisten the earth and to make it fruitful [so] the Gospel of our Salvation by Christ [...] was appointed by his goodness not to be published, in vain, but so to fall & moisten the field of Gods Church, that it may be fertile, and in deed bring forth the fruit of remission of sins.⁶²

Cooper's application of this is that men are to labour and travail, be watchful and diligent; women must appreciate 'what danger may come to [them] by Idle gadding and Gassing

⁵⁹ The boundaries between what did and what did not constitute dramatic performance in medieval and early modern England remain blurred. Sponslor points to some of the difficulties of interpretation in this area, arguing that modern 'terminology and genre definitions' present problems when seeking to account for the various elements of performance that were involved in practices such as processions, games and other seemingly non-dramatic activities (such as sermons and daily meditations), [Sponslor, Claire, "Drama in the Archives: Recognizing Medieval Plays" in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. by Peter Holland & Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.111-30].

⁶⁰ Cooper, Thomas, *A brief exposition f such chapters of the olde testament as usually are redde in the church at common praier on the Sindayes set forth for the better helpe and instruction of the unlearned. By Thomas Cooper Bishop of Lincolne. [Imprinted at London : By H[enrie] D[enham] for Rafe Newberry dwelling in Fleetstreete, 1573. Britich Library, STC (2nd ed.) / 5684. < [⁶¹ Ibid.](http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99844317&FILE=../session/1248688039_18895&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&ECCO=undefined&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=param(HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD)> [accessed 27 July 2009].</i></p>
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⁶² Ibid.

abroad without the company of some grave Persons to Oversee them.⁶³ Thomas Achelley articulates similar admonitions against idleness to 'THE RIGHT Honourable and virtuous Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Russell'.⁶⁴ Encouraging her 'always to be exercised in some good work [so as to] be preserved from al temptations of Satan, who is ever ready, when we be idle, to seduce us from thee our Saviour', Achelley warns against the dangers of 'dreams, or phantasies, that might disturb our minds from the meditation of thy grace'.⁶⁵ Calling on her at all times to remain watchful and meditative, this denunciation of idleness is intended to find its embodiment in a daily practice of religion – through which virtue is exercised, performed through self-imposed acts of obedience and duty. Like Cooper's expositions and the two interludes, Achelley articulates a common concern amongst the educated and powerful that idleness is not simply a source of sloth, but is fundamentally evil because it is unproductive. Performances of *Nice Wanton* and *The Triall of Treasure*, like preaching, prayer and meditation, are the opposite of idleness because they are constituted through work deemed to be productive precisely because it reveals indolence as destructive and encourages a more assiduous and industrious approach to life.

The relationships between idleness and notions of productivity would be explored further some twenty years later in a number of plays in which idleness is staged and turned into a form of popular dramatic entertainment: the anti-idleness tracts cited above condemned idleness, but common playing made the performance of idleness theatrically productive,

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Achelley, Thomas, *The key of knowledge Contayning sundry godly prayers and meditations, very necessary to occupy the mindes of well disposed persons*, [Imprinted at London: By William Seres, (ca. 1572). British Library STC (2nd ed.) / 85a. < http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=SINGLE&ID=99851091&ECCO=N&FILE=../session/1248688421_19702&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&SUBSET=1&ENTRIES=1&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=default > [accessed 27 July 2009].

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

and so lucrative. When, in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* (a play dominated by the playful and often comic depiction of Hal, Falstaff and their followers as idle and unproductive characters – idle and unproductive in that they refuse to participate in the sanctioned world of legitimate social, cultural and economic practices), King Henry 'so shaken as we are, so wan with care' (1.1.1) is confronted with news of 'gallant [Hotspur's] honourable spoil [his] gallant prize' (1.1.52 & 75), he responds by lamenting 'I, by looking on the praise of [Hotspur], see riot and dishonour stain the brow of my young Harry' (1.1.83-5). Just a few lines later this opening scene ends and the Prince and Falstaff enter to enact something of this 'riot and dishonour' on stage. Falstaff asks after the time of day, celebrates their nocturnal criminal activities (and their practice of sleeping during the day), asks the Prince not to have him hanged when he becomes king, complains of his melancholy, speaks of a man he met in the street who berated him about the Prince and declares he will join Hal on his next escapade to 'take a purse' (1.2.96) – for "'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation' (1.2.101-2). The Prince meanwhile spends his time teasing Falstaff, goading and provoking him as he also celebrates their illegitimate and transgressive nocturnal activities – 'for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon' (1.2.30-3). Though this idleness, that has so offended the king, is later (according to the Prince) declared a front – designed to conceal 'his beauty from the world, that when he please again to be himself, being wanted he may be more wondered at by breaking through the foul and ugly mists of vapours that did seem to strangle him' (1.2.194-98) – it is, in the contexts of its theatrical performance, anything but unproductive. It is their idleness that enables the two men (and Poin) to provoke humour, to plan future escapades (whetting the

audience's appetite for what is to come) and for the Prince to reveal that he is merely playing a part – a part he will, at some point, drop to reveal another identity. Later, after their return to the tavern from the robbery at Gadshill, it is idleness that gives the Prince the time and leisure to 'practice an answer' before his father, Falstaff to 'examine [Hal] upon the particulars of [his] life', and the Prince, playing his father, to berate both himself and 'that villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan' (2.4.369-457). This mock meeting between the king and his son enables the two players to assume a variety of roles (for both their onstage and offstage audiences) and to exploit their fictional surroundings in order to highlight the theatricality of their endeavour and to associate it (pleasurably) with idleness and common playing:

FALSTAFF

This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown [...] Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be though I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyzes' vein.

[...]

HOSTESS

O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith! [...] he doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see!

[...]

PRINCE

Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.
(2.4.373-428)

Conceived for common playing, *1 Henry 4* both stages idleness and, in the contexts of its performance on commercial stages, reveals it as a highly productive and lucrative activity – its capacity for giving pleasure to its audiences being the ground of its commercial success. In terms of the narrative of the play, the Prince's idleness is a source of deep pain and anger for his father – identified at the outset of the play as the source of the king's despair and envy, it provides the measure by which Hotspur's successes and activities are

judged by the king. Later, King Henry equates his son's idleness with 'inordinate and low desires, such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts, such barren pleasures, rude society, as thou art matched withal and grafted to' (3.2.12-5), but by then the play has already presented the Prince's idleness as anything but 'poor [...] bare [...] mean [and] barren'. The Prince's idleness has been a source of theatrical pleasure as it has provided the context for the setting up and carrying out of the Gadshill robbery (with its tricking of Falstaff), the mock encounter between the king and his son, and the arrival of the Watch at the tavern and the picking of Falstaff's pockets whilst he is asleep – Falstaff 'fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse' (2.4.521-22) is, perhaps, idleness most clearly represented and parodied, and it offers one of the most humorous, rewarding and theatrically productive moments in the play (as Falstaff's sleeping enables the Prince and Peto to search his pockets, find his papers, advertise (humorously) their contents to the audience, and for the Prince to declare that he will 'procure this fat rogue a charge of foot, and I know his death will be a march of twelve score' (2.4.538-40)). For an audience, the interactions between the Prince and Falstaff, and the Prince and his father, are theatrically fruitful precisely because they exploit the collisions between action and inaction, revealing idleness as rich dramatic ground providing ample opportunities for the comic, the burlesque and a heightened level of theatricality.

In 'other countries [of the] few that do work, how few be occupied in necessary works'.⁶⁶ Utopia's argument (that idleness leads to vagrancy and vagrancy to criminality) is articulated through a narrative in which an ideal society is produced through the

⁶⁶ Bruce, p.59.

imposition of certain forms of work and their associated practices – practices which always relate to places: Utopia as a place is produced and defined by the social and labour practices that go on there. Those who perform these practices belong to Utopia through their spatial production of Utopia's cities, those who 'walk out of his precinct and bounds, taken without the prince's letters he is brought again for a fugitive or a runaway with great shame and rebuke, and is sharply punished' – a second offence leading to bondage.⁶⁷ It is little wonder, then, that:

Now you see how little liberty they have to loiter, how they can have no cloak or pretence to idleness. There be neither wine-taverns, nor ale-houses, nor stews, nor any occasion of vice or wickedness, no lurking corners, no places of wicked councils or unlawful assemblies. But they be in the present sight and under the eyes of every man. So that of necessity they must either apply their accustomed labours, or else recreate themselves with honest and laudable pastimes.⁶⁸

Attested to by More's *Utopia* is the figure of an idealised state, but it is difficult not to feel that it also presents a set of anxieties about his current one – 'the destruction of the individual as a private and self-regarding entity is a positive goal in Utopia; at the least, the ways by which a person could constitute himself as being distinct from those around him are radically reduced'.⁶⁹ *Utopia* moves from enclosure to a political system in which daily life is governed by the needs and dictates of a highly centralised state; the capacity to move from place to place is circumscribed by a political system designed to maintain and legitimate particular practices. Idleness threatens this space because it denotes a tactical mode of behaviour articulated through practices which are not aimed at legitimate productive work. Intimately bound up in a state-imposed order of social relations, Utopia is, ultimately, the repressive and highly organised space of duty and obligation – the

⁶⁷ Bruce, p.68.

⁶⁸ Bruce, p.68.

⁶⁹ Greenblatt, 1980 (pp.40-1).

product of an hierarchical system of social practice designed and imposed by those in authority, a principal function of which was to maintain a status quo that worked to their advantage. Like the forms of standardised measurement that came to be introduced during the sixteenth century, *Utopia* (the book) is an attempt to measure, to map out and construct another type of spatiality. Though Utopia points backwards to a more feudal spatiality, *Utopia* is 'a clear harbinger, if not "usher in", of the capitalist order to come'.⁷⁰ One of the 'necessary preconditions to [that] capitalist spatiality', *Utopia* not only translates one thing (a nation) into another (a conceptualised representation of space), by defining Utopia through the fixed practices that produce it, *Utopia* is an expression of anxiety concerning other, more flexible, porous and unregulated ways through which a nation might fashion itself.⁷¹

More's vision is, of course, a fantasy, but it is one that clearly contests those shifts in early modern social practice that were seen to mark the emergence of a new spatiality – the product and productive of newly emerging economic markets. In ideological terms, Raymond Williams sees the early modern pastoral vision as 'at best a false vision, positing a simplistic, unhistorical relationship between the ruling, landowning class [...] and the workers on the land', but this does not preclude its potential to express (and produce) anxieties about the culture of which it was part (and which it helped to shape).⁷² More's *Utopia*, though fantasy, is not a "'reduction" or simply a "false vision", but rather a

⁷⁰ Sullivan Jr., Garrett A., "Space, Measurement and Stalking Tamburlaine" in *Renaissance Drama New Series*, 28 1997, ed. by Masten, Jeffrey and W. Walls (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 3-27 (p.7).

⁷¹ Masten and Walls, p.7.

⁷² Montrose, Louis, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: the Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form" in *ELH* 50:3 (Autumn 1983) p.419.

“primary activity” [...] an instance of a totalizing cognitive process by which [...] experience was structured, represented and explored’.⁷³ *Utopia* says as much about the social and cultural spaces that produced it (and which it helped shape) as it does about the spaces it argues for and seeks to define.

For More, England suffers from the fact that ‘the unreasonable covetousness of a few hath turned that thing to the utter undoing of your island, in which thing the chief felicity of your realm did consist’.⁷⁴ There is more than a sense of loss here for a past world against which the present one is judged and found wanting; though it is tempting to see this in the light of the biblical fall (and so More’s own pious Catholicism), More’s real debt is to Christian humanism and, in particular, the power of reason – ‘if these imaginary Utopians, acting in ignorance of Christ and led purely by the light of reason, were capable of such virtues, such excellent social organisation, then how could it happen that Europe, enjoying the inestimable boon of the Christian Gospel, had to groan under the burdens of war, disease, crime, and misgovernment?’.⁷⁵ Though *Utopia* offers considerable religious freedom (‘there be divers kinds of religion not only in sundry parts of the island, but also in divers places of every city’), this ‘masks draconian demands of obedience to the state’ – religious diversity and tolerance contributes to state control.⁷⁶ For More, remedy and restoration comes not by a return to Christian piety but by reasserting those economic

⁷³ Montrose, Autumn 1983 (pp.419-20).

⁷⁴ Bruce, p.23.

⁷⁵ Dickens, A. C., *The Age of Humanism and Reformation: Europe in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p.134. See also, Sharpe, J. A., “Economy and Society” in *The Sixteenth Century: 1485-1603*, ed. by Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.33-5, and Brigden, Susan, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: the Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603* (Harmondsworth: Viking Penguin, 2001) pp.181-88.

⁷⁶ Bruce pp.106-7. Simpson, James, *Reform and Cultural Revolution (The Oxford English Literary History, Vol. 2, 1350-1547)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.234.

and social practices whose demise he perceives as the principal cause of ‘this wretched beggary [...] and excessive riot’:

Let husbandry and tillage be restored; let clothworking be renewed, that there may be honest labours for this idle sort to pass their time in profitably, which hitherto either poverty hath caused to be thieves, or else now be either vagabonds or idle serving men, and shortly will be thieves.⁷⁷

Of course, ‘husbandry [...] tillage [and] clothworking’ had never ceased; for the first half of the 16th century the agricultural industry continued to provide adequate food for the population as a whole (a situation that would change towards the end of the century), local wool and textile industries providing for their local markets and contributing to ‘the continuation of a fifteenth-century boom in wool exports [...] to Antwerp’.⁷⁸ However, as the economic consequences of changes in farming practices and demographic growth resulted in ‘an upsurge in vagrancy’, what changed was the numbers and the visibility of the idle poor – ‘people down on their luck, many of them on the road looking for work, and willing to beg or resort to casual theft if no work was forthcoming’.⁷⁹ More’s remedy is a response not so much to an economic problem as a social and political one: the idle poor should be returned to those practices with which the poor had formerly been associated because their current visibility highlighted a rupture in what were seen as previously stable relationships between class and social and economic activities. More’s anxiety is essentially a nostalgic one for a return to a commonwealth where idleness is excluded and where ‘labor, both manual and intellectual, is at once an acknowledgement of the defective human condition and the means of its repair. The program articulated in

⁷⁷ Bruce, p.24.

⁷⁸ Sharpe, J. A., in Collinson (ed.) pp.28-30.

⁷⁹ Collinson (ed.), p.36.

More's fiction is to reclaim the wilderness by the joint labors of cultivation and education'.⁸⁰

A more complex view of the past (in which pastoral's capacity for nostalgia is itself problematised) will be expressed nearly a hundred years later from the vantage point of professional theatre (whose development can be traced though those markets opened up by enclosure). Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was part of an early modern romanticising of the Robin Hood (of the wood) story which, drawing on contemporary anxieties about forests as lawless places of migration and instability, nuanced these by appeals to the Forest of Arden as 'the golden world' (1.1.113). Although Orlando (*de Bois*) sees in his servant Adam '[the] good old man [in whom] appears the constant service of the antique world, where servants sweat for duty not for meed' (2.3.56-8), the links between their relationship and an earlier way of life of greater social and economic stability are problematised by Orlando's perception of the forest as a precarious place of want rather than plenty ('this uncouth forest [...] in the bleak air [...] this desert' (2.6.7-17)), a place of unexpected encounters.⁸¹ If the relationship between Orlando and Adam pays any tribute to an older world of greater certainty where noble and peasant stood shoulder to shoulder, it does so without nostalgia for it – for Orlando experiences the forest largely without Adam (whose only appearance in the forest is when he is carried there, starving, by Orlando). Richard Wilson argues that the rupture between these two ages is presented

⁸⁰ Montrose, Autumn 1983 (p.426).

⁸¹ Richard Wilson associates Orlando with Hobsbawm's 'primitive rebel' or 'social bandit', as such he is the product of an environment of cultural displacement that is as much geographical as it is social – enabling him to stand 'on the frontier between capitalism and peasant society' [Wilson, Richard, *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p.69].

in the play as the result of enclosure – just as More’s peasantry were forced out of their homes to steal ‘or else now be either vagabonds or idle serving men, and shortly will be thieves’, so ‘the Shakespearean text [...] knows commercial farming will thrust the destitute into vagrancy and crime’.⁸² Oliver’s intention to burn Orlando alive in his lodging is described by Adam as part of ‘his practices’ – ‘this is no place: this is but a butchery’ (2.3.26-8). For Orlando, the consequences are inevitable, ‘What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food, or with base and boisterous sword enforce a thievish living on the common road?’ (2.3.31-3). Just as the rogue literature presents roads, alleyways and footpaths as exposed and dangerous sites, so in *As You Like It* it is the roads to the forest that, associated with criminality, cause the greatest concern:

ROSALIND

Alas, what danger will it be to us,
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

CELIA

I’ll put myself in poor and mean attire,
And with a kind of umber smirch my face –
The like do you; so shall we pass along
And never stir assailants. (1.3.105-11)

As You Like It pits notions of civility and courtesy against the pastoral – and mocks all three. The Forest of Arden may be anticipated by Celia as a place of ‘liberty and not banishment’ (1.3.135), Duke Senior may find ‘these woods more free from peril than the envious court’ (2.1.4), but the reality for many of the characters is of a place every bit as deceptive and precarious as the court – where Rosalind (as Ganymede) fools Orlando, the Duke (her father) and Phoebe, and where Celia (as Aliena) fools all. At court, Duke Frederick has usurped his brother and banishes Rosalind, Oliver plots the death of his own

⁸² Wilson, p.68.

brother (who flees); but, in the Forest, Corin has no fleeces of his own to shear and his 'master is of churlish disposition and little recks to find the way to heaven by doing deeds of hospitality' (2.4.79-81), and it is Rosalind who (disguised as Ganymede) manipulates others and orchestrates the many marriages with which the play ends. Louis Montrose suggests that the play explores the consequences of primogeniture for younger siblings and the rivalry that ensues; far from providing a pastoral idyll, *As You Like It's* Forest of Arden is a contentious site in which a whole range of bitter rivalries are played out and resolved.⁸³ Though the play ultimately affirms a natural justice that might well be recognisable to More, the forest where these contentions have been played out (the qualitative space of performance produced by the players) has (whatever the outcome) presented dangers to all. Indeed, Montrose argues that the degree of struggle and danger involved is essential to the play's broader social and theatrical purposes as 'both a theatrical *refection* of social conflict and a theatrical *source* of conciliation [...] For the large number of youths in Shakespeare's audiences [...] the performance may have been analogous to a rite of passage, helping to ease their dangerous and prolonged journey from subordination to identity, their difficult transition from the child's part to the adult's'.⁸⁵ As been demonstrated above, there is much in first two acts of *As You Like It*

⁸³ Montrose, Louis, "'The Place of a Brother' in *As You like It*: Social Process and Comic Form" in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32:1 (Spring 1981) 28-54.

⁸⁵ Montrose, 1981 (pp.54-5). Michael D. Bristol relates the play's ambivalent presentation of Arden to the ambivalence of early modern pastoral – which he describes as 'a kind of forerunner of the contemporary genre of science fiction. Pastoral and science fiction are literary thought-experiments that represent the underlying structure of existing social relations and also project alternative social possibilities' [Bristol, Michael, D., "Shamelessness in Arden: Early Modern Theater and the Obsolescence of Popular Theatricality" in *Print, Manuscript, Performance: the Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, ed. by Arthur, F., Marotti and Michael D. Bristol (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), pp.279-306 (p.296).

that associates enclosure with vaganbondage and criminality; Utopia makes a more emphatic connection between them and epitomises enclosure as essentially destructive – marking a tendency, argues Kinney, both to exaggerate the effects of enclosure and to ignore the ways by which enclosure functioned to bring about new markets and industries resulting from new economic and social practices.⁸⁶ If enclosure led to the keeping of smaller households, the laying off of servants and a decrease in hospitality, another consequence (according to More) was that

Gentlemen's servants [...] also handicraftsmen, yea, and almost the ploughmen of the country, with all sorts of other people, use much strange and proud newfangledness in their apparel, and too much prodigal riot and sumptuous fare at their table. Now bawds, queans, whores, harlots, strumpets, brothel-houses, stews; and yet another stews, wine-taverns, ale-houses, and tippling houses, with so many naughty, lewd, and unlawful games, as dice, cards, tables, tennis, bowls, quoits, do not all these send the haunTERS of them straight a-stealing when there money is gone?⁸⁷

The rupture between the individual and place exacerbated by enclosure produced not only different spaces, but more elusive ones. More feared a social mobility whereby the gentleman's servant became the thief, the ploughman (even) a frequenter of whores and ale-houses, in which social space became a more indeterminate and equivocal commodity – transformations facilitated by enclosure (whereby a change of clothing and a full table of food could suggest a change of class and degree) became dangerous territory precisely because appearances could be deceptive. In an age when 'dress [...] was regulated by rank, not by income', no longer was the English ploughman necessarily dressed and eating according to his station, there now existed the potential for him to define himself differently – giving autonomy (a degree of control on how others might encounter him)

⁸⁶ Kinney, 1990 (pp.19-25).

⁸⁷ Bruce, p.23-4.

and a novel potential for anonymity.⁸⁸ Philip Stubbes, in his 1583 *Anatomy of Abuses* (a wide-ranging attack on what he saw as extravagant, profitless and frivolous social and cultural practices – including common playing) would later ‘single out “the pryde of apparel” as the most widespread vice in Britain [...] the one most offensive in God’s eyes’, equating the willingness of (male) actors to wear female clothes not only with the transgressive nature of theatre but also with the debasement of modern men in comparison with their forefathers – as if modern men who gave in to ‘excessive wearing of silks, velvets, satins, damask, taffetas and such like’ were ‘weak, tender and infirm, not able to abide [...] sharp conflicts and blustering storms’.⁸⁹ For Stubbes, the ‘preposterous excess’ of modern dress permitted ‘everyone [...] to flaunt it out, in what apparel he lust himself’, producing a society ill-equipped to contend with life’s ‘sharp conflicts and blustering storms [because] it is very hard to know who is [...] who’.⁹⁰ A similar complaint had been made four years previously by another antitheatrical polemist, Stephen Gosson – who claimed that ‘male actors who wore women’s clothing could literally “adulterate” male gender’ locates theatrical transvestism within a broader set of anxieties about

⁸⁸ Jardine, Lisa, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp.141-68. Stubbes, Phillip, *the Anatomy of Abuses*, (London, 1595) <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99853178&FILE=../session/1266664388_3503&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&ECCO=undefined> [accessed on 20 February 2010]

⁸⁹ Stubbes, Phillip, *the Anatomy of Abuses*, (London, 1595) <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99853178&FILE=../session/1266664388_3503&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&ECCO=undefined> [accessed on 20 February 2010]. Jardine, p.147. Howard, Jean E., *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), pp.98-100.

⁹⁰ Stubbes, Phillip, *the Anatomy of Abuses*, (London, 1595) <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99853178&FILE=../session/1266664388_3503&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&ECCO=undefined> [accessed on 20 February 2010]. Jardine, pp.147-48.

perceived discrepancies between appearance and reality.⁹¹ The moral and intellectual dangers of transvestism lay in the fact that every 'act executed where it ought not' had the potential to rupture a social fabric defined through its individual members playing their part:

The proof is evident, the consequence is necessary, that in Stage Plays for a boy to put on the attire, the gesture, the passions of a woman; for a mean person to take upon him the title of a Prince with counterfeit port, and train, is by outward signs to show themselves otherwise than they are, and so within the compass of a lie.⁹²

Increasing prosperity and mobility produced not only a rapid change of fashions in Tudor England, but an increase in the range of markets in which clothing (and so theatrical costumes) participated. Clothes were not only both a necessity and a luxury, they were also an investment – in a society devoid of deposit accounts, clothing was a principal means by which money could be translated into material possessions (and vice versa).⁹³ Trading in second-hand clothing was widespread, a recognised means of releasing money – part of a market that playing companies played a significant part in sustaining. If 'for centuries differences in dress had been a reliable register of the hierarchies of class and position, the blurring of these distinctions [...] were alarming to political authorities'.⁹⁴ Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece* (an early Tudor interlude dating from about 1512) offers a playful response to this alarm when, at the opening of the play, **A** mistakes **B** for a player

⁹¹ Levine, Laura, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.10. A summary and extracts from Gosson's 1579 pamphlet *The Schoole of Abuses* (from which Levine quotes) is found in Chambers, IV (pp.203-05); the full text was accessed online on 31 March 2010 at http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V150928

⁹² Gosson, Stephen, "Playes Confuted in Five Actions" in Hazlitt, pp.157-218 (pp.195-97). Levine, pp.195-97.

⁹³ Stallybrass, Peter, "Properties in Clothes: the Materials of the Renaissance Theatre" in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.177-201 (pp.177-79).

⁹⁴ McDonald, Russ, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: an Introduction with Documents* (Boston & New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2001), p.232.

because of his 'apparel', and laments that 'there is so much nice array amongst these gallants nowadays, that a man shall not lightly know a player from another man'.⁹⁵ A's error reminds his audience that clothes were not only 'theatrical properties [but] were simultaneously economic capital, material memory-systems and transgressors of every social boundary'.⁹⁶

Utopia anticipates these tensions, for Utopia recognises and eschews such dangers – a notable feature of Utopians is their dismissal of outward appearances (and so the various trades 'in which clothing was both an industrial base and a staple currency in its own right') and the freedom this gives them to 'embrace chiefly the pleasures of the mind, for them they count the chiefest and most principal of all'.⁹⁷ Gosson's invective dates from a point when the enforcement of the sumptuary code was breaking down (by 1604 the legislation would be repealed) and speaks of the difficulties of attempting to prescribe not only style but a whole range of social, cultural and economic practices whose relative fixity had previously helped define social status and produce social space – but which increasing social and economic mobility now subjected to a range of pressures.

The activities condemned by More, which (he suggests) thrive under present conditions, are perceived as symptomatic of a social and economic break down. However, 'wine-taverns, ale-houses, and tippling houses, with so many naughty, lewd, and unlawful games, as dice, cards, tables, tennis, bowls, quoits' also point to the practices of an

⁹⁵ Medwall, Henry, "Fulgens and Lucrece" in *Five Pre-Shakespearean Comedies*, ed. by Frederick Boas, (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp.1-72 (p.4)

⁹⁶ Harris and Korda, p.195.

⁹⁷ Korda, Natasha, "Women's Theatrical Properties" in Harris and Korda, pp.202-29 (p.203). Bruce, p.83.

opportunistic and competitive world shaped by a new set of market forces – a freer exchange of money and goods, and a growing leisure services industry catering (especially in the capital) for a burgeoning youth population and those with free time and disposable income. By the mid-1500s, the City authorities’ concern over increasing levels of crime gave rise to greater enforcement of the regulations to control and curtail those economic markets and activities which, like bowling alleys, dancing schools, brothels and alehouses, were seen to ‘draw the young away from their masters and tempted into vice’ and were seen to feed ‘on the spendthrift habits of the poor’.⁹⁸ The perception that the markets that catered for leisure activities also dealt in criminality strengthened throughout the 16th century: ‘A common belief was that theft followed the “business” “verie closelie”’.⁹⁹ Not only brothels and playhouses, but ale-houses and taverns also were seen by the authorities as transgressive spaces in which goods and services were offered, money changed hands, the sexes mixed relatively freely, and which catered for the various needs of a constantly shifting and expanding population – many of whose sense of identity in relation to London was a constantly negotiated process that incorporated their various allegiances and relationships to homes, counties, towns and villages outside the capital.¹⁰⁰ Hodgdon argues that, by the 1590s, for most of the population the experience of life in the capital (one’s sense of identity) was characterised by a sense of transience and fluidity:

⁹⁸ Archer, Ian, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.242.

⁹⁹ Griffiths, Paul, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime and Control in the Capital City 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.153.

¹⁰⁰ Hodgdon, Barbara, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth: Texts and Contexts* (Boston & New York: Bedford, 1997), p.211. Archer pp.242-44. Brown contests the assertion of a number of social historians of the period (including Peter Clark, Barry Reay and Peter Burke) that the ale-house and tavern were predominantly all-male locations [Brown, Pam Allen, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.15-6 & 20].

To be a Londoner was to be a vagrant [and] such a vagrant identity represented a position of experimentation, a way of configuring the individual outside of the fixed, secure boundaries of place [...] the alehouse was a response to vagrancy, a space of mobility and freedom where one could become part of a 'family' without being tied down to the duties and disciplines of a domestic household.¹⁰¹

Shakespeare explores something of this transience and social fluidity in his early play, *1 Henry IV*. Though its opening scene establishes a dominating quality (as opposed to locale) for the royal court, the action then shifts to an unspecified location whose very different quality is determined largely by the coarse and comic interactions between Falstaff and 'Hal' previously noted in this chapter. The absence of any courtly protocol between them, their focus on robbery, drink, the darkness of night, 'my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench' (1.2.39-40), judgement and punishment articulates a complex set of relationships between these two disparate characters, the fictional world of the play and the real world that this theatrical production was part of. The exchange between Hal and Poins towards the end of this scene establishes a clearer focus on both the economic activity (highway robbery) that underpins their lifestyles, the markets on which this activity and these lifestyle depend ('pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings and traders riding to London with fat purses' (1.2.121-23)) and the practices through which their trade is practiced – deceit and cozenage. Poins' plan to trick Falstaff and the rest of the gang out of the money they have robbed turns a criminal act into a theatrical jest that celebrates tactical opportunism (1.2.157 & 180), but it also inscribes it within a more familiar pattern of cozenage that depends on exploiting the gulf between the assumed stability of place and the potential of transgressive practices to intervene in and destabilize it (a pattern that is explored in more detail in chapter 3).

¹⁰¹ Hodgdon, p.211.

The robbery at Gadshill is effected through disguise, deceit and transgressive spatial practices in which Falstaff and the robbers use the Pilgrims' sense of security in the place to catch them off-guard:

FIRST TRAVELLER

Come neighbour. The boy shall lead our horses down the hill; we'll
walk afoot awhile, and ease our legs.

THIEVES

Stand! (2.2.75-8)

The thieves' disguise (BARDOLPH: Case ye, case ye, on with your vizards (2.2.51)) is part of the means by which they undermine the pilgrims' sense of stability in relation to the place Gadshill, but this is then turned on them as the Prince and Poins enter (differently disguised) and the sense of security that Falstaff and the thieves' have acquired in relation to place is itself exploited and overturned – to the Prince and Poins' (and the audience's) advantage. This scene relies for its effectiveness not only on characters recognising and exploiting the properties of place (and the tendency of others to put their faith in these), but also in their capacity to use costume as a form of disguise and a mode of intervention in the social and political order. Though the two groups of thieves disguise themselves in order to deceive their victims, Hal uses it also as a means of concealing his identity as a prince. Hal's ability to move between different identities is facilitated by clothing in these two scenes, but the tactical disposition it defines is clearly revealed two scenes later when the Sheriff and the Watch arrive at the tavern in Eastcheap looking for the robbers, when the Prince drops any pretence at disguise and uses his princely identity to safeguard himself and his friends. When, later, he tells his father he 'shall hereafter [...] be more myself' (3.2.92-3), he makes clear that this too is something of a costume, a tactical decision to dress himself in order to assert a particular identity: 'I am your son, when I will

wear a garment all of blood and stain my favours in a bloody mask which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it' (3.2.134-37). Like the alehouse, common playing produced spaces in which notions of identity could be experimented with, where the 'fixed, secure boundaries of place', costumes and disguises were playfully exploited to produce a theatrical experience that delighted in transgressive modes of behaviour and the interactions between the strategies of power and the tactics of those operating at a more opportunistic and individualistic level.¹⁰²

More implies that a consequence of enclosure was the opening up of a wider range of social and cultural practices, and market forces, than had previously been the case. The move from an economic model 'that was regional, concentrating, once the needs of subsistence had been met, on the local market' to a more national one of 'economic integration' facilitated and was facilitated by different pressures regarding working practices.¹⁰³ An early modern performance of *1 Henry IV* participated in a number of markets that developed in response to those pressures. The rogue and cony-catching pamphlets developed in response to anxieties about the transgressive uses of places and the production of more elusive and unpredictable spaces, the development of professional theatre was a response to similar spatial anxieties.¹⁰⁴ *1 Henry IV* stages robberies, deceptions and disguises, but it did so in a medium (common playing) that

¹⁰² Hodgdon, p.211.

¹⁰³ Collinson, p.19. Acknowledging the local contexts (including economic) in which people lived out their lives in the 16th century, J. A. Sharpe also notes that, as England 'moved towards a more integrated governmental system' during the century, so its growing national economy (stimulated by developments in commercial agricultural production and an expanding London market) increasingly came to make demands of, and shape, local economic systems [Sharpe, J. A., "Economy and Society" in Collinson, pp.19-25].

¹⁰⁴ The relationships between the rogue and cony-catching literature, common playing, and the spatial economies they participated in are dealt with in chapter 3.

relied on its ability to appropriate places and turn them into the experiential spaces of popular entertainment. Leisure, entertainment and criminality are not only staged in this play, the play's very performance was a participation in those markets whose emergence and growth were seen as unfortunate consequences of enclosure and the move away from the local and towards 'national [...] economic integration'.¹⁰⁵

Migration increased throughout the 16th century, and was a response both to enclosure and the growth of London and the trades and markets located there – which included the markets for ale-houses, taverns, prostitutes and professional theatre.¹⁰⁶ Given that 'the Renaissance market was as much a concept as a place', Bruster's highly textured definition of it 'as a place, an action, a demand and an opportunity' enables a view of this traffic into and out of the capital not simply in terms of supply and demand (cause and effect) but as a set of possibilities, opportunities that 'transcended not only exact definition, but indeed the physical *loci* of exchange – a fair ground, a commercial street, a room in a brothel'.¹⁰⁷ Against the strategies of the powerful (who sought to create extensive and integrated markets for new commodities – such as wool and cloth) the weak adopted tactics enabling them to 'make do' (which is to say that they were increasingly required to work for personal advantage rather than the immediate benefit of employers).¹⁰⁸ More describes and condemns practices which, as much as anything else, blur the distinction between work and leisure. Whoring, drinking and cards (in this context) conflate work and leisure

¹⁰⁵ Collinson, p.19.

¹⁰⁶ Rappaport Steve, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.61-122. Griffiths, pp.147-71.

¹⁰⁷ Bruster, Douglas, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.15.

¹⁰⁸ de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p.29.

into a single activity. This is not to say that they meant the same thing for those who participated in them (prostitution is work for the prostitute, leisure for the customer). However, If previously work and leisure were seen as two distinct categories (the purpose of the latter to keep one from idleness and to prepare one for the former – ‘to recreate themselves with honest and laudable pastimes’) and the behaviour associated with them defined in relation to place, such an analysis is no longer adequate.¹⁰⁹ If the market went wherever its producers and consumers went, then it cannot be defined in relation to place: ‘the dividing line no longer falls between work and leisure. These two areas of activity flow together. They repeat and reinforce each other’.¹¹⁰

Those forced off the land and (possibly) out of their homes in early modern England were dependant to a large degree on circumstances for their survival – and it is circumstances, those transient, constantly shifting and mutating contexts shaping everyday life that would have shaped the practices that individuals and groups developed in order to survive and ‘make do’. As the resulting practices could not be defined by, or identified with, place, neither could their practitioners. Instead, what was required (and what emerged) was an opportunistic and entrepreneurial spirit of usurpation (tactical by nature) that manipulated and used spaces for immediate personal gain. The shift in practices More condemns marks a particular way of operating on the part of the unemployed, itinerant and dispossessed, a style of action denoting a degree of intervention in the regulatory and controlling strategies of the powerful: the politically weak turning things to their own

¹⁰⁹ Bruce, p.68.

¹¹⁰ de Certeau, p.29. Bruster, p.15. For a critique of Bruster’s economic model, see Korda, Natasha, “Women’s Theatrical Properties” in Harris and Korda, pp.202-29 (pp.202-04).

advantage – in the process, disrupting a dominant and dominating spatiality through practices which appropriated spaces in unpredictable and capricious ways, thus denying the controlling strategies and practices of state their total and totalising authority.

Whatever the actual relationship between rising numbers of vagrants and changes in farming practices, changes in the social and political fabric of early modern England brought about by increased social mobility gave rise to new social, cultural and economic practices – generating new and qualitatively different experiences of place and conceptions of identity.¹¹¹ The old systems of subsistence and tenant farming had created a notion of identity rooted in relatively clear and homogeneous relationships between the individual, the community and the land – it was a combination of localised and relatively stable places and practices that had previously produced one's sense of space. Throughout the sixteenth century, places and practices increasingly interacted in significantly different, more varied and heterogeneous ways, producing spaces whose meaning derived less from traditional direct relationships between land, farming and daily life and more from the ways by which places were appropriated.

Something of the resultant spatial tensions are discernable in Shakespeare's plays which contrast the court/city with the rural/pastoral. As *You Like It's* juxtaposing of Duke Frederick's court with the Forest of Arden has already been noted, *The Winter's Tale* opens with Archidamus lamenting 'the great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia' (1.1.3-4) and creating a clear distinction between 'such magnificence [and] our

¹¹¹ Brigden, Susan, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: the Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603* (Harmondsworth: Viking Penguin, 2001), pp.184-85. Griffiths, pp.8-19.

insufficiency' (1.1.12-5). But Sicilia's 'magnificence' is soon qualified by the experience of it as a place of fear, where 'tis safer to avoid what's grown than question how 'tis born' (1.2.423-33). The performance of Leonte's jealousy increasingly determines the nature of the dramatic space that constitutes Sicilia, his humiliation of Hermione produces her as the focus of a stage space in which she is publicly held up for shaming, and suggests the same possibility for others who would fall foul of him:

LEONTES

You, my Lords
Look on her, mark her well: be but about
To say 'she is a good lady,' and
The justice of your hearts will thereto add
'Tis pity she's not honest, honourable'. (2.2.64-8)

In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare creates an initial distinction between a magnificent Sicilia and a lacking Bohemia only then to problematise it. By the end of act 3, the repressive and controlled space of Sicilia stands in marked contrast to its initial presentation and production – contrasting also with the audience's expectations of Bohemia as a place initially encountered as 'deserts [...] famous for the creatures of prey that keep upon it' (3.3.2-13) but which (following Antigonus's *exit, pursued by a bear*) immediately opens into the comic space of pastoral. Shakespeare's pastoral vision for Bohemia, however much it might look back with any nostalgia for a lost past, engages with its cultural present. The shepherd's discovery of the baby Perdita happens in the context of his looking for his lost sheep, and any anxieties about that loss, any sympathies he and the Clown might have for the baby, the drowning men and Antigonus being eaten alive by the bear, are soon swept away by the discovery of the gold wrapped up with Perdita. Elizabethan pastoral traditionally represented the 'opposed interests of Commons and Gentles [...] in the opposition of Ploughman and Shepherd'; in Bohemia, Shakespeare

juxtaposes the shepherd with the clown, and mocks both – the acquisitive tendencies of the shepherd and the questionable sympathies of the clown.¹¹² The Shepherd's vested interests in the sheep and pity for the child are quickly forgotten when the prophecy which 'was told me I should be rich by the fairies' (3.3.116) appears fulfilled: 'Let my sheep go: come, good boy, the next way home' (3.3.124-25).

Bohemia's rural economy may be principally centred on sheep and the wool trade, but it is not limited to it. The forthcoming 'sheep-shearing feast' (4.3.37) is a celebration of the wealth to be had from the shearing of fleeces, but it also provides an opportunity for characters such as Autolycus to practice their own illicit trades – trades associated by *Utopia*, the interludes and biblical exposition discussed above with idleness and its ensuing vagabondage and criminality. The legitimate rural economies are first introduced by the Clown working out both the market value of the wool and what to buy for the feast: 'Let me see: every 'leven wether tods; every tod yields pound and odd shilling: fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to?' (4.3.32-4). But this is not the only economic market at work here, and the Clown's interruption by Autolycus introduces a highly transgressive figure who, though not part of the legitimate rural economy, represents a range of other economies that intervene in and feed off it:

AUTOLYCUS

My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds look to lesser linen. My father named me Autolycus; who, being as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles.

(4.3.23-6)

¹¹² Montrose, Autumn 1983 (p.425).

At the end of the 16th century, the Pages in *As You Like It* will sing of ‘the green cornfield [and] acres of the rye’, but theirs is a nostalgic looking back to a former (golden) time ‘where the “pretty country folks” did sport “In spring time, the only pretty ring time” (5.3.16-39)’ – which nostalgia is qualified by Touchstone’s dismissal of both a ‘foolish song’ (5.4.40-7) and its singers.¹¹³ Ten years later, Autolycus (dismissed from the service of Prince Florizel and condemned to ‘wander here and there’ (4.3.17)) sings with not even the vaguest hint of nostalgia: his Spring song is the song of a rogue, its ironic juxtaposing of daffodils with doxies, ‘my aunts’ with ‘tumbling in the hay’ (4.3.11-2), tinkers with the stocks, speaks not of similarity but of difference – the difference between nostalgic evocation and the harsh reality of rural life where ‘the red blood reigns in the winter’s pale’ (4.3.4). A scene which begins with the singing Autolycus and a mock madrigal ends with the staged deception and robbery of the Clown – and a reminder not only that Autolycus (and the economies in which he participates) will be at the sheep-shearing, but of that inevitable interactivity between legitimate and illegitimate economic markets.

Arthur Kinney cites a growing ‘distance between employer and employee’ as characteristic of the changes in working practices that developed in the 16th century.¹¹⁴ Largely destructive of the relationship that had existed between them previously, what emerged was a distance necessary to the processes of modernisation that were taking place in

¹¹³ Wilson, Richard, *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.80. Hutton draws on and enlarges the work of Keith Thomas in this area. Pointing to the tendency of early modern ‘commentators to locate the vanished age of merriment in the relatively recent past’, Hutton adds that this was in fact true – the decline in ‘Tudor culture of seasonal celebration’ meant that, from the perspective of popular culture, the immediate past was always richer than the present (and goes some way to explaining ‘the enchantment of backward vision which is the essence of nostalgia’). Hutton, Ronald, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), p.153.

¹¹⁴ Kinney, 1990 (p.21).

many areas of commercial and domestic life. And it was as much a geographical as a social distance: leaving the land to work at home as a weaver for a distant clothier, for example, had the potential to turn a home into a prison cell when demand slackened and imports meant that one's cloth was not needed – when there was no longer an immediate and local authority to appeal to. Lefebvre argues that

The history of space will begin at the point where anthropological factors lose their supremacy and end with the advent of a production of space which is expressly industrial in nature – a space in which reproducibility, repetition and reproduction of social relationships are deliberately given precedence over works, over natural reproduction, over nature itself and over natural time.¹¹⁵

Utopia represents one such active moment in the move towards what would become an industrial production of space. *Utopia* and the England it describes, laments and hopes for, outlines the contradictions of an emergent world in which space 'is a phenomenon which is colonized and commodified, bought and sold, created and torn down, used and abused, speculated on and fought over'.¹¹⁶ Backward-looking onto a presumed golden age, yet also pointing forward towards the possibility of another, *Utopia* as pastoral functioned as criticism of the status quo.¹¹⁷ Expressive of a longing for a time when localised, social space was dominated by nature, *Utopia* pointed to future, ideal possibilities, 'the potential for respite even if that respite exists nowhere entirely' and opens up an imaginative space in which the conditions for that longing might be realised.¹¹⁸ More a critique than a commentary, *Utopia* articulates an essentially political fear (which would later echo through the anti-vagrancy legislation and rogue and cony-

¹¹⁵ Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.119-20.

¹¹⁶ Merryfield, Andy, "Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space" in *Thinking Space*, ed. by Crang, Mike and Nigel Thrift (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.167-82, (p.173).

¹¹⁷ Everton, Michael, "Critical Thumbprints in Arcadia: Renaissance Pastoral and the Process of Critique" in *Style*, 35 (1) Spring 2001 p.7.

¹¹⁸ Everton, pp.6 & 3.

catching literature of the period) to do with the loss of control over the fixity of the relations and practices that had produced what had been, from More's perspective, a stable social space.¹¹⁹

1.3 VAGRANCY AS IDLENESS

Through an exploration of the anti-vagrancy legislation of the early modern period, this chapter now goes on to demonstrate how vagrancy came to be perceived as a particularly dangerous and malignant form of idleness. Common playing became increasingly singled out throughout the sixteenth century as an especially transgressive practice, this chapter goes on to note the relationship between this perception and the spatial practices of common playing – arguing that it was common playing's tactical appropriation of borrowed spaces and its alluring of its audiences that caused it to be seen by the authorities as particularly malevolent and, potentially, seditious.

That begging had, prior to the 16th century, been accepted as an inevitable consequence of living in a fallen and precarious world is illustrated by the lack of any significant attempt through legislation to manage it. The 16th century marks the beginnings of a significant shift in attitudes, however, when there was increasing suspicion of people who could not be defined in relation to a place, coupled with an equal distrust of those deemed idlers (those whose subsistence did not seem to depend on legitimate labour practices). The change in attitudes is reflected in the increasingly repressive legislation which, in defining what constituted legitimate and illegitimate vagrancy, helped constitute vagrancy as a

¹¹⁹ The relationships between this fear and the rogue and cony-catching literature are dealt with in detail in chapter 3.

social and political pressure that had not previously been the case. Moreover, the legislation makes clear that vagrancy was always defined as the transgression of a legitimate set of spatial practices. Vagrancy as practised place produced a social and cultural space, the result of an intervention by one logic (of practice) into another (of place), and what was intended as a productive and fruitful encounter by its users/producers (vagrants) was seen as subversive and transgressive by others.

Henry VIII's proclamation of 1530 against 'great rowtes and companies' of vagrants saw the threat to be in the potential for social disorder when vagrants collected together in groups, rather than in the relationship between a vagrant and how 'he might get his living'.¹²⁰ His statute of 1531 went significantly further, however, criminalising various classes of vagrancy, it extended to 'any part of this Realme' the definition of a vagrant as any able-bodied person who 'can give none reckoning how he doth lawfully get his living'.¹²¹ What this established was a clear association between vagrancy and idleness; after defining what constitutes vagrancy, the statute then refers to vagrants simply as 'every such idle person' and deserving of punishment and correction.¹²² Demanding that local and regional authorities apprehend and punish vagrants – tying them to a cart, stripping them naked, whipping them until bloody 'thorough out the same market town or other such place' – was an attempt to ensure that punishment was a social and performative practice returning 'the same market town or other such place' to the king's

¹²⁰ Kinney, 1990 (p.44).

¹²¹ Chambers, E. K., *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), IV, p.260. Kinney, 1990 (pp.43-4).

¹²² Chambers, IV (p.260).

authority.¹²³ Thus the legislation's definition of vagrancy as a matter of idleness was also a concern for how space was produced (and who produced it). What it attempted to prescribe was the social constitution of 'this Realme' as a place: by defining what was and what was not legitimate employment, and relating this (and the practices of punishment and correction) to specific places, it sought to define a nation-space that was the product of state-authorised markets, processes and practices. Vagrancy needed to be countered precisely because it denoted a set of spatial practices that made tactical (and, therefore, illegitimate) uses of places – doing so for individual advantage, rather than for the benefit of the state or the common weal. Public punishment was a form of purgation designed to cleanse and return the space to its former, untainted, condition.

The understanding that vagrancy constituted idleness and was the contravening of a set of legitimate relationships between places and practices informs all subsequent anti-vagrancy legislation of the sixteenth century. There is always a significant gap, of course, between what is prescribed and what actually happens. However, the legislation increasingly points to a perception of vagrancy as a breach in the dominant rules of space, a perception which came increasingly to be bound up in a notion of idleness as any seemingly unproductive activity – including that undertaken by common players. Claiming to be acting 'for the good and virtuous occupation of his people, the preservation of the same from idleness, the mother and root of all mischiefs', Henry VIII's 1545 proclamation desired not simply to restrain 'vagabonds, ruffians, and idle persons (including common players)' but to put them to productive work 'in these his wars, in certain galleys and

¹²³ *ibid.*

other like vessels which his highness intendeth to arm forth against his enemies'.¹²⁴ Like other forms of itinerant and seemingly unproductive work, common playing was 'no labour or honest kind of living but [...] falsehood in play, whereby many simple young men be polled, and some utterly undone'.¹²⁵ However, the identification of common playing with idleness related to its lack of fixity in relation to place – for one of the principal accusations made against players was that they practice their 'detestable vices and fashions [...] at Bank[-side] and such like naughty places, where they much haunt [...] for the accomplishment and satisfying of their vile, wretched and filthy purposes'.¹²⁶ Though this particular complaint dates from the 1540s (and so from a time before Bankside came to be associated with the permanent playhouses), it voices a concern that is continually reasserted throughout the century (which this chapter goes on to describe). Players were deemed idle not only because they produced nothing of any material substance, but also because rather than being identified in relation to fixed locations they 'haunted' (i.e. appropriated) their places of work.

Edward VI's 1547 legislation required vagabonds to be chained, forced to work for the borough by whipping, to ensure that both they and the communities that accommodated them were made aware that the contribution of those communities to the state was made through the practices that went on in them.¹²⁷ By 1549, the definition of vagabond was

¹²⁴ "Proclamation of Henry VIII against Vagabonds, Ruffians, and idle persons (including common players). 26 May 1545" in *The English Drama and the Stage Under the Tudor and Stuart Princes 1543-1664* ed. by Hazlitt, W. C. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1869), pp.6-7 (p.7).

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Kinney, 1990 (p.45).

extended to include any able-bodied person refusing to work for a 'reasonable wage'.¹²⁸ However, a division was opening up between vagabonds and players and the possible consequences of their respective idleness, whereby common playing was singled out as being a particularly subversive form of idleness, and so in need of special legislation to control it. Edward VI's *First Proclamation Against Dramatic Performances* (1549) was targeted at that 'great number of those that be common players of interludes and plays, as well within the city of London as elsewhere in the realm' and forbade the playing 'openly or secretly [...] in the English tongue [of] any kind of interlude, play, dialogue or other matter set forth in the form of a play'.¹²⁹ Unconcerned with the Latin drama of the academy, the injunction was targeted at the playing companies and the possible effects of their itinerant work on the population at large. A fear of dramatic performance's corrosive potential is especially evident in Edward VI's *Second Proclamation* of 1551, which expressed concern about those who would 'sow, spread abroad, and tell from man to man, false lies, tales, rumours and seditious devices, against his majesty, his councillors, magistrates and justices'.¹³⁰ Targeted at 'vagabonds, unlawful games, tellers of news, inventors of tales and rumours [and] unlawful assemblies' the proclamation narrowed this down to that 'great number of idle persons and masterless men, which seek rather by idleness and mischief to live by other men's labours and industries than to travail by any painstaking'.¹³¹ The specific inclusion of 'common players', who were again forbidden to perform 'in the English tongue, any manner interlude, play or matter' without licence from the king, acknowledged the potential of dramatic performance to remain elusive to

¹²⁸ Kinney, 1990 (p.45).

¹²⁹ Hazlitt, pp.8-9.

¹³⁰ Hazlitt, p.10.

¹³¹ Hazlitt, p.12.

more conventional forms of censorship – and the power that accrued to it by virtue of its itinerant nature.¹³²

As well as banishing ‘all manner of vagabonds and masterless men’ from the city and suburbs of London, the proclamation commanded that

no man be so hardy either to devise any tale, rumour or talk, touching his majesty, his council, magistrates, justices, officers or ministers [for] divers printers, booksellers, and players of interludes, without consideration or regard to the quiet of the realm, do print, sell, and play whatsoever any light and phantastical he had list to invent and devise.¹³³

What was emerging was a conception of playing not as idleness but as an illegitimate (and potentially subversive) activity, and it was drama’s capacity to transgress the boundaries (physical as well as political and social) of early modern England (and especially London) that constituted it as a threat. Common playing was dangerous because it was produced through a set of practices that used other people’s places, deflecting them from their original purposes (‘haunting’ them) before returning them to their owners – the temporary and elusive spaces of performance were seen as particularly fruitful sites of dissent because therein ‘any light and phantastical he’d listeth to invent and devise [might] daily [...] arise and follow, among the king’s majesty’s loving and faithful servants’.¹³⁴ Rumour, at the start of Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV*, declares ‘upon my tongues continual slanders ride’, and proceeds to ‘[stuff] the ears of men with false reports’ (INDUCTION 6-8), but his ability to ‘bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs’ (INDUCTION 39-40) is presented as both engaging and attractive. He *enter[s] painted full of*

¹³² Hazlitt p.14.

¹³³ Hazlitt p.13.

¹³⁴ Hazlitt p.13.

tongues and his opening challenge to the audience implicates them playfully in the practice he embodies: 'Open your ears; for which of you will stop the vent of hearing when loud rumour speaks?' (INDUCTION 1-2). As well as reflecting current anxieties over the dangers of rumour and those contexts wherein 'any light and phantastical he'd listeth to invent and devise [might] daily [...] arise and follow', Rumour plays on and exploits the pleasure to be derived from such transgressive practices – and weaves this into the play's dramatic texture right at the start.

The numbers of licensed beggars rose dramatically in the 16th century – as did the numbers of those labelled rogues and vagabonds.¹³⁵ It was the perceived prevalence of rogues and vagabonds (those associated with dissembling and cheating) that caused begging as a whole to be seen as a problem.¹³⁶ Those going about the country 'without sufficient authority derived from or under our Sovereign Lady the Queen' and engaged in practices deemed unlawful were deemed vagabonds (and so liable to severe punishment).¹³⁷ Unlawful practices included using subtle crafts or unlawful games or plays, telling of fortunes, palm reading, being of sound body and able to work but with no lord or master, and not being able to explain how one made one's living. Others criminalised by virtue of their professions included fencers, bearwardes, common players in interludes and minstrels 'not belonging to any Baron of this realm or toward any other honourable personage of greater degree', jugglers, peddlers, tinkers and petty chapmen who were not licensed by at least two justices of the peace.

¹³⁵ Kinney, 1990 (pp.25 & 46). Griffiths, pp.27-35 & 67-76. Collinson, p.36.

¹³⁶ Collinson, p.36.

¹³⁷ Kinney, 2002 (p.13).

Elizabeth's act of 1572 highlights some significant points in relation to contemporary conceptions of vagrancy and idleness.¹³⁸ Those engaged in unlawful practices and wandering without authority were criminalised, but none of those listed by the legislation were idle in the sense of being inactive. In fact, their identification was based precisely on what they did, not what they did not do. Idleness may well have been seen as a failing, even a breeding ground for subversion and sedition, but clearly idleness was not a matter of doing nothing – rather, it meant doing the wrong things, participating in the wrong economies and not being located in and circumscribed by specific places.¹³⁹ In the space of 40 years, the perception of idleness had shifted – no longer seen as the cause of vagrancy, idleness was its defining feature (exemplified by those whose lives were lived through practices which operated outside the dominant social, cultural and spatial economies). All the practices proscribed by the 1572 Act (like those condemned by *Utopia*) relate to economic markets and social and cultural practices wherein 'the dividing line no longer falls between work and leisure'.¹⁴⁰ Henry's statute of 1545 needed to include common players among the idle, by 1572 this was no longer necessary – the associations between vagrancy, idleness, and common playing (and other forms of popular entertainment) were well established. Fifty-six years after the publication of *Utopia*, the suspicion was of practices that, while constituting social, cultural and economic activity, yet produced nothing tangible and of material benefit to the commonweal, and which could not be related to and identified with specific places.

¹³⁸ Hazlitt, pp.21-3.

¹³⁹ Kinney, 2002 (p.86). Henke, Robert, "Comparing Poverty: Fictions of a 'Poor Theatre' in Ruzante and Shakespeare" in *Comparative Drama* 41:2 (Summer 2007) 193-217 (pp.196-97).

¹⁴⁰ de Certeau, p.29.

A 1574 Act of Common Council suggests that a significant concern was to do with how performance practices and performance places interrelated in ways that legitimised those practices and transformed legitimate places into illegitimate spaces. By authorising private playing and restraining public playing, the 1574 Act makes clear a qualitative distinction between them – the former is legitimate, the latter illegitimate. Staged entertainment is legitimate when sanctioned through containment ‘in the private house, dwelling, or lodging of any nobleman, citizen, or gentleman’.¹⁴¹ However, common playing is circumscribed because ‘plays, interludes and shows [cause] inordinate haunting of great multitudes of people’ leading to ‘affrays, quarrels, evil practices of incontinence’ – a Privy Council minute of 1578 speaks of ‘certain players within the borough of Southwark [...] alluring of the people to their plays’.¹⁴² ‘Haunting’ and ‘alluring’ are highly evocative of the ways by which common playing was seen to operate on, produce and condition its audiences. Common playing engaged tactically in a set of practices that punctured (and so threatened) the strategies of state not only when players wandered the country, appropriating spaces for their own immediate uses; the power to allure, to deflect people from their normal activity and to utilise this to produce a space best described as ‘haunted’, points to a subversive power inimical to both the laws of legitimate practice and of legitimate space.¹⁴³ When, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Peter Quince hands out the parts to his fellow workmen and tells them to ‘meet me in the palace wood, a mile

¹⁴¹ Chambers, IV (p.276).

¹⁴² Chambers, IV (pp.273 and 277).

¹⁴³ Rumour, too, was seen in terms of its illegitimate uses of public spaces – hence the relationships that were found between it and common playing. The potential for rumour to lead to unrest and subversion was a real concern both for the crown and for the London civic authorities from the 1550s onwards and was directly associated with the growth in size of London and the problems of policing it. London’s uncontrolled growth was deemed to provide ample opportunities for its public spaces to be appropriated for such things as the defacing of public notices and for the spreading of ‘misinformacons [and] false rumors and untrue aspersions’, Griffiths, pp.45-7.

without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse', it is because 'if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known' (1.2.94-7). On their arrival 'at the Duke's oak' (1.2.103), the first thing the men do is appropriate the site before beginning to rehearse their play: 'This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action, as we will do it before the Duke' (3.1.3-5). Although 'the kind of acting group depicted here [...] never actually existed at all [...] there is no reason why their rehearsal should not be regarded as broadly true-to-life, in so far as it needs to be' – and in so far as it both reflects and exploits contemporary anxieties about alluring practices and appropriated spaces.¹⁴⁴

There are important indications here of how playgoing came to be seen in the period. As Jean Howard has argued, it was predominantly the politics of playgoing (rather than the politics of staged representations) that troubled contemporary anti-theatrical polemicists.¹⁴⁵ The 1574 legislation may well have conflated the plague and common playing with a view to suppressing drama in the Liberties, but it was able to do so through a rhetoric that says little about theatrical representation, but much about the spaces and practices that constituted common playing.¹⁴⁶ From the legislators' perspective, common playing caused 'disorder [...] inconvenience [...] affrays [...] quarrels [...] evil practices of incontinence' leading to 'corruptions of youth and other enormities'; however, this potential was clearly associated with the uses to which players and playgoers alike put the

¹⁴⁴ Stern, Tiffany, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2000) pp.30-1.

¹⁴⁵ Howard, pp.73-92.

¹⁴⁶ A conflation that would later be developed to shore up the notion that plagues and playhouses were 'pathologically congruent'. Mullaney, Steven, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), p.49. See also Robert, Yann, "The Theatre and the London Liberties: the Place of the Sacrificial Stage" in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 74:4 (Fall 2005) 957-63.

spaces of performance.¹⁴⁷ For playgoers, '[the] great inns, having chambers and secret places adjoining to their open stages and galleries, inveigled and allured maids [...] to privy and unmeet contracts, the publishing of unchaste uncomely and unshamefast speeches and doings'.¹⁴⁸ For criminals, public dramatic performances provided them with opportunities for 'sundry robberies by picking and cutting of purses, uttering of popular busy and seditious matters'.¹⁴⁹ For players, a place of performance required them to construct and use 'scaffolds, frames, stages [...] engines, weapons and powders used in plays [to] play or show [...] any words, examples or doings of [...] unchaste sedition [and] such like unfit and uncomely manner'.¹⁵⁰ For innkeepers, tavernkeepers and others with a 'house, yard or any other place', an empty space provided the opportunity to make money by 'causing or suffering to be openly showed or played [...] any play, interlude, comedy, tragedy, matter or show'.¹⁵¹ Whatever the gaps between what was described and what actually happened, the suggestion is that, against the strategies of state, players, playgoers and landlords operated tactically to secure their own, individual, advantage – borrowing and appropriating places of performance and turning them into elusive, transitory spaces. Laurence Humphrey's 'idle noble man [who] licentiously roams in riot, coasting the streets [...] haunting plays, feasts, baths and banquettings' exemplifies a disposition to act tactically through practices that turn (public and private) places into his spaces – including his space of dramatic performance.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Chambers, IV (pp.273 and 277).

¹⁴⁸ Chambers, IV (pp.273-74).

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Chambers, IV (p.274).

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² Gurr, Andrew, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.213.

The legislation indicates anxieties about what could happen when playgoing left the controlled and dominant space of the nobleman's house and entered the less ordered and less controlled world of public places. The bill also indicates that its concern was not theatre *per se*, nor the representations of power and authority that theatre authorised, but rather the interactions and activities that constituted playing and playgoing as practices: 'Public playing is presented as altering social relations by the emergent material practices attendant upon play production and attendance, quite apart from any consideration of the ideological import of the fictions enacted on the stage'.¹⁵³ Howard notes how the economics of playgoing turned 'guests into customers' and transformed social relations; but this only partly explains the anxieties underlying the legislation attacking common playing – for the capacity to incite fear lay in the capacity of players and playgoers to operate tactically, usurping orthodox and authorised logics of place and legitimate practices, and exploiting these for personal gain.¹⁵⁴ Those vagrants listed by the 1572 act as needing to be licensed were all engaged in lawful practices (such as jugglers, peddlers, tinkers and petty chapmen) but whose need to travel from place to place could cause them to be (mis-)construed as vagrants. The appropriation of public spaces was, in certain circumstances, an established and accepted practice (part of the social, political and economic fabric of the day) – but only when authorised.

1.4 CONCLUSION

More's *Utopia* and the anti-vagrancy legislation of the 16th century participated in a debate about newly emerging conceptions of space – offering anxious responses to its

¹⁵³ Howard p.75.

¹⁵⁴ Howard pp.74-5.

perceived contradictions. Much of the discourse on space articulated through the legislation attempted to define and control the relationships between individuals and places, thereby seeking to prescribe the social and economic practices that would produce the space most conducive to those with power and authority. The purpose of this was unashamedly political: common playing was a problem because it was seen to appropriate places and because it was produced through a set of practices associated with idleness – the legal and critical discourse functioned as a means of legitimising the production of a more dominant and dominating space. The legislation identified a ‘problematic of space’ which was a problematic in ‘the social relations of production’, permitting state interventions whose ideological force was simultaneously masked and revealed through a language of common sense ‘passing [itself] off as established knowledge’ – ‘The king’s most excellent majesty, our natural sovereign lord, certainly and understanding of the good advice and information of the lords and others of his privy council [...]’.¹⁵⁵ Part and parcel of the colonization and commodification of space essential to modern capitalism, *Utopia* and the anti-vagrancy legislation testify to a conception of space as a thing to be ‘actively produced as part of capitalist accumulation strategies [...] produced before it is reproduced – even though reproduction is obviously a necessary condition for further production’.¹⁵⁶ It was a space that enabled financial transactions that turned guests into customers, but it was not essentially a product of those transactions. To read *Utopia* and the anti-vagrancy legislation without regard to the complex sets of practices that they were both responding to and participating in is to misunderstand the nature of the spaces being contested – for both *Utopia* and the legislation constitute ‘representations of

¹⁵⁵ Lefebvre, p.90. Crang and Thrift, p.172. Hazlitt, p.9.

¹⁵⁶ Crang and Thrift, p.172.

space'.¹⁵⁷ Though responding to anxieties concerning the ways by which, for some, space was being newly produced and experienced in the early modern period, what they ultimately provided were objectifications of space.

Utopia's criticism of vagrancy is founded on the roles vagrants find for spaces and the types of operations that bring these spaces about. Practices which blur the distinction between work and leisure (denoting a tactical form of behaviour no longer directly related to and identified by place), in contesting dominant and dominating spatialities, articulate a way of operating that seeks to use, deflect and manipulate pre-existing spaces, rather than define and impose their own.¹⁵⁸ Though *Utopia* tolerates 'journeying and travelling abroad', it only does so under the condition that 'no man goeth out alone, but a company is sent forth together with their prince's letters'.¹⁵⁹ 'Lurking corners [...] places of wicked councils or unlawful assemblies' are impossible in *Utopia*, for there everyone is 'in the present sight and under the eyes of every man'.¹⁶⁰ Lacking its own places from which it could operate, the spaces of early modern vagrancy were, by definition, elusive and appropriated – interventions in a dominant spatiality that turned borrowed places to the immediate advantage of their users.

In Tudor society, where 'playing a role designed and dictated by the system was essential', morality was the personal choice either to stick to the script, or to depart from or

¹⁵⁷ Lefebvre, pp.38-9.

¹⁵⁸ Masten and Wall, p.7.

¹⁵⁹ Bruce, pp.67-9.

¹⁶⁰ Bruce, p.68.

improvise around it.¹⁶¹ Both *Utopia* and the anti-vagrancy legislation testify to a mindset predisposed to seeing an automatic link between individual deviancy (in terms of social and cultural practices) and sedition. *Utopia suggests* that idleness leads to vagrancy; the legislation went further, by defining vagrancy in terms of idleness and by criminalising it, it articulated a link between idleness and (ultimately) treason.¹⁶² The relationships between vagrancy, idleness, work, leisure and common playing were thus not only deep-seated and complex, but also inimical to and, potentially, deeply subversive of the social and political order. The relationships between vagrancy and common playing which led to the criminalising of both, was founded on a perception of them both as transgressive spatial practices which, in appropriating and converting to their own uses places which were not theirs, produced spaces which were resistant to the constraints of an emerging spatiality predicated on a need to define and control.

¹⁶¹ Smith, Lacey Baldwin, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia*, (London: Pimlico, 2006), pp.138-39.

¹⁶² Smith, 2006 (pp.138-39).

CHAPTER 2

THE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF COMMON PLAYING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter demonstrated how the conflation of common playing with idleness was a process, resulting from common players' borrowing of other people's spaces and converting them to their uses through appropriating stage practices which were localized, tactical responses to their contexts of performance. Operating outside legitimate spatial economies, it was its inherent resistance to the dominating spatial strategies of state that caused common playing to be seen by those in power as subversive and threatening. This chapter explores the appropriating and tactical spatial practices of common playing; by focusing on a number of plays of the period (and drawing on modern theatre practice for the insights it offers) this chapter examines these plays for what they reveal about how early modern players might have used their times and places of performance to produce spaces that were encountered as engaging and creative.

When, in 1573, the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London turned down the Lord Chamberlain's request for 'the appointment of places for plays and interludes within this city', their fears were for 'the governance of this city [...] namely the assemblies of multitudes of the Queen's people'.¹ Dramatic performances they associated with 'sundry inconveniences, whereof the peril is continually, upon every occasion, to be foreseen';

¹ Hazlitt, W. C., ed., *The English Drama and the Stage Under the Tudor and Stuart Princes 1543-1664* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1869) pp.23-4.

authorising places for dramatic performance would be to authorise the practices through which the spaces of dramatic performance were constituted – transitory spaces characterised by their capacity to draw and transform crowds into assemblies and ‘tumults [...] whereby much hurt is done’.² Prior to the emergence of the playhouse as a significant device for the spatial ordering of London-based dramatic performances, London’s common players appropriated other people’s places: the evidence suggests that it was this that was seen as drama’s principal and most threatening characteristic.³

The habit of some playing companies regarding London as their home developed over time – and even when they were habituated to think in this way (because they had a foothold in one of the capital’s playhouses) touring was frequent and an essential part of all London-based companies’ practices.⁴ Even after the building of the London playhouses, borrowed places continued to be where most dramatic performances took place – with some companies even splitting into two, one remaining in (or near) the capital, the other out on the road.⁵ It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the practices of playing in borrowed, appropriated places were consistent with the practices of playing in fixed,

² Hazlitt, p.24. Griffiths describes how vagrants performing on the capital’s streets were prosecuted precisely because of the threat they posed to public order by virtue of their attracting onlookers – vagrants’ unlicensed and tactical usurpation of public places (streets and street corners) was criminal for no other reason than that they were seen to interrupt the normal social and economic traffic that such spaces were intended for, [Griffiths, p.107].

³ Gurr notes that, even by the middle of the second decade of the 17th century, drama outside of London still ‘necessarily took place outside the kinds of physical structures that defined theatre in London [and that] the narratives of their performance are necessarily interrelated with the places (inns and churches, town halls and great halls) in which they occurred’. Gurr, Andrew. “Theatre without Drama: Reading REED” in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. by Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.43-67 (p.54). Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996b) pp.19-54.

⁴ Gurr, 1996b (pp.36-54).

⁵ Gurr, 1996b (pp.38, 47-51).

purpose-built places, and that a significant part of a player's technique lay in his ability to transform any place (borrowed or purpose-built) into the space of dramatic performance.

Edmund Tilney's appointment in 1578 as the first Master of the Revels was a response not to playtexts but to playing practices – he was not asked to scrutinise plays but 'to secure more direct control over playing companies and their products'.⁶ Playing companies did not submit scripts to him, but rather were required 'to present and recite before our said Servant or his sufficient deputy'.⁷ Tilney was concerned with what actors *did*, or rather with how what they did related to what they said, and the implications of this for how an audience would understand it – it was 'a check on performances' rather than a check on plays.⁸ A similar practice had been upheld nationally since 1559, since when, touring companies (on arriving at a new town) would, typically, be licensed to perform before a wider audience only *after* their play had been first performed before the town's corporation.⁹ Performing the play (rather than submitting a script) was an essential requirement because the authorities recognised that drama's inherent danger lay in its practices – not simply in lines of dialogue, but in those actorly practices through which literal meanings could be inflected, challenged or even subverted, practices with the capacity to contract audiences into that subversion. Playing before the authorities was an attempt to constrain the nuances of dramatic production and to safeguard audiences – as such, it was also an attempt to determine the nature and quality of the spaces of performance.

⁶ Gurr, 1996b (pp.55-6).

⁷ Gurr, 1996b (p.57).

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Gurr, 1996b (p.39).

A payment made at Bristol in October 1573 ‘for taking down the table in the mayor’s court and setting up again after the said players were gone’, like that ‘for repairs to a board and the doors of the guildhall’ after a visit by the Earl of Leicester’s men, and (after a visit by the Lord Chamberlain’s men) repairs to ‘the cramp of iron which shutteth the bar [...] which cramp was stretched with the press of people at the play’ bear witness to some of the consequences of drama’s appropriation of its physical places of performance.¹⁰ Martin Slater and Aaron Holland’s alteration of ‘some stables and other rooms, being before a square court in an inn to turn them into galleries’ represents an extreme form of appropriation, but is entirely consistent with a more general need on the part of all early modern playing companies to be ready (often at short notice) to travel and to convert ‘a scaffolded hall at court, a private house in the Strand, the hall of country house, or a market place, inn, or guildhall in a country town’ into a vibrant space of dramatic performance.¹¹ But for the actors, appropriation was not limited to the initial business of engaging with the physical properties of a place, defining and demarcating the principal performance area(s), but extended also to the production of space in the contexts of performance – the logic of which was dependent on the actors’ abilities to deploy a range of stage and performance practices that, in making tactical uses of stage space and audience space, of actors and spectators, appropriated them for immediate, theatrical advantage.

¹⁰ Holland and Orgel, pp.46 & 52.

¹¹ Gurr 1996b (pp.44-5).

2.2 LOCUS AND PLATEA AS SPATIAL PRACTICES

Robert Weimann, noting the transitional nature of Elizabethan and early Jacobean society and the 'social quality of its culture', argues that, as much as Shakespeare's plays responded to the anxieties and ambiguities of their day, they also helped to constitute them.¹² Central to the dramatic structure of the plays conceived for common playing was an actor/audience relationship whose quality depended on the active engagement of an audience that fully expected to be appealed to and involved as collaborators in the action (rather than set apart as spectators on it).¹³ In borrowed places of performance, this dynamic was the product of actorly practices that established physical boundaries and thresholds, only to exploit and transgress them in the contexts of performance for dramatic effect. A threshold was a 'liminal space between the actual and the potential' in which players functioned as ushers – moving between the stage and the audience, between the embodied fiction of the play and the spectator's imagination, between mimetic representation and stage/audience interaction.¹⁴ Lacking a unified and homogeneous concept of a stage, common playing mediated the action of a play through a spatial interplay that made sophisticated uses of what were originally two separate places, the *locus* and *platea*.¹⁵ The quality of dramatic performance was thus spatially produced through the actors' uses of the physical site of performance – uses which were always tactical responses to localized conditions.

¹² Weimann, Robert, "Shakespeare and Marxist Methodology" in *Science and Society*, Spring 1977, 41(1) p.3.

¹³ Weimann, Robert, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form*, ed. by Robert Schwartz (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987) (pp.161-69).

¹⁴ Bruster, Douglas and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) p.37.

¹⁵ Weimann, 1977 (pp.73-84). Weimann, 1987 (pp.73-85 & 161-69). Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.180-208.

The early modern platform stages brought about and consolidated the final transformations of the *platea* and *locus* from two separate areas (presenting different possibilities for audience contact or estrangement) into two qualitatively different types of spaces, but the interplay between them (and the different modes of performance implied) were always at work in the contexts of dramatic performance. The character of the space in performance was determined by the interactions between differentiated and localized place (*locus*) and undifferentiated and unlocalized place (*platea*), to view these as discrete stage areas translates complex, lived, spaces into ‘a texturology from on high’.¹⁶ This dissertation argues that, by the middle of the 16th century, *locus* and *platea* were not separate places but different qualities of space, determined by the uses to which the player could put them – not the product of stage geographies but of stage practices.

Colin Counsell identifies the *locus* with raised scaffolds and platforms, a distinct area separated from the audience by empty space:

Like the plinth on which a statue is placed or the literal frame surrounding a painting, such ‘framing signifiers’ signal that the event thus isolated is special, the bearer of symbolic meaning, and therefore to be decoded.¹⁷

This rendering of the *locus* as a reification of abstract concepts, whose meanings are reclaimable through semiotic readings, assigns a primarily symbolic value to the *locus* – a consequence of reading the stage as a drama separate from the audience and the various uses to which they are putting it. Distanced, the drama in the *locus* is objectified, removed

¹⁶ Crang, M., “Relics, Places and Unwritten Geographies in the Work of Michel de Certeau (1925-86)” in Crang and Thrift, pp.136-53 (pp.136-7). Crang’s term relates to de Certeau’s critique of modern society’s tendency to privilege vision over use, ‘measuring everything by its ability to show or be shown’, and the knowledge that is derived from this. De Certeau contrasts this with practices ‘which elude the gaze of theory’ and which give rise to other modes of knowledge, [Crang and Thrift, pp.147-48].

¹⁷ Counsell, Colin, *Signs of Performance: an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), pp.18-9.

from the practices of everyday life (no matter how the drama was being produced, or how it related to *platea*-practices or the broader networks of energies and interactions determining the relationships between players, spectators and performance). Elevated, the *locus* is transformed by the gaze into the realm of ‘higher issues of religion and morality’, transformed by a discourse whereby what happens in it is understood through the language brought to bear on it – rather than on a wider range of imperatives derived from the experiences audiences might have had of it.¹⁸ Equating height and distance with lofty ideas not only assigns an unwarranted privilege to concepts over practices, it assumes that religion and morality are primarily concepts rather than lived practices.¹⁹ Exactly where Time and Barnabas addressed their audiences from at the end of *The Trial of Treasure* and *Nice Wanton* (whether from a raised dais or platform, from the area furthest away from the audience or from that closest to them and at the same level) depended on the nature of the spaces produced through performance (not, primarily, on their ontological statuses and symbolic significances). This nature would have been a phenomenological configuration, a product of the spatial practices through which a production worked to engage its audience, and how they have encountered it – factors that would have varied from location to location, from performance to performance.

The players’ uses of *locus* and *platea* practices produced the dynamic interplay between two different types of spaces that characterised the spatial fluidities of early modern

¹⁸ Counsell, pp.17-8.

¹⁹ As Lin observes, such a categorising and conceptual approach to staging in the period creates an upstage-downstage dichotomy and (unhelpfully) makes this ‘central to the definition of *locus* & *platea*’ [Lin, Erika T., “Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann’s Concepts of *Locus* and *Platea*” in *New Theatre Quarterly*, 22:3 (2006), 283-298 (p.286).

dramatic performance. Though the areas closest to the audience were those most available for direct stage/audience contact, interaction with an audience was possible from any part of the performance space, and any *locus/platea* interplay automatically involved an audience that was constantly being drawn into or deliberately excluded from the shifting currents of theatrical production.²⁰ Gurr, referring to this as ‘three-dimensional staging’, defines it as the product of an interplay between players adopting *locus* stage positionings (facing outwards towards the audience) and actors adopting *platea* stage positionings (facing inwards, away from the audience and towards the stage).²¹ The *platea* was thus a liminal space in which the player could exploit the threshold between the authoritative and localised action of the *locus* and the audience – producing an unlocalised site of mediation with the potential for creating not a confrontation between the world of the play and that of the audience, rather ‘the most intense *interplay* of both’.²² If ‘all Elizabethan stages were three-dimensional’, it was because they were the product of flexible performance practices which, in pre-dating modern concerns for verisimilitude, acknowledged their audiences and wove their participation into the textures of performance.²³ Both borrowed and purpose-built places were appropriated in performance by players whose stage practices could accommodate both types of location – practices which turned places into three-dimensional spaces of performance.

²⁰ Moreover, an audience was by no means a single, monolithic and homogeneous entity, different sections of it could be appealed to and engaged in different ways for different purposes – broadening the scope and quality of performance, enabling it variously to benefit a dispersed and vicarious audience.

²¹ Gurr, Andrew, “A New Theatre Historicism” in Holland and Orgel p.79. The term is also used by Pauline Kiernan in relation to approaches taken to blocking at Shakespeare’s Globe, London, which worked against the actors’ tendencies to use the pillars as a proscenium arch frame, [Kiernan, Pauline, *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe* (Basingstoke & London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp.60-6].

²² Weimann, 1987 (p.81).

²³ Holland and Orgel, pp.79-81.

2.3 LOGICS OF THE STAGE

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Pre-dating any strict division between performance space and audience space, stage and auditorium, the plays conceived in the latter decades of the 16th century for performance in both purpose-built playhouses and borrowed sites reveal no clear distinction between the world of the play and the world of the audience. Central to their dramaturgical construction was a participatory role for the audience productive of a single world in which actors worked with and for audiences who, in turn, worked for them – it was a collaborative mode of production, with playhouses, playtexts and performances dialogically conceived to include audiences who expected to be appealed to and involved in the production of a play's energies and dynamics. Much of Weimann's work has drawn a distinction between 'the world of the play' and 'playing in the world', but this can create a false dichotomy between two different spaces and blind us to the nature of drama as spatial activity – phenomenologically, in the contexts of dramatic performance, the world of the play and the world of which it was part were always interacting to produce a single space of performance (it was precisely this encounter through which dramatic space was produced and perceived).²⁴ Early modern drama functioned not as a series of shifts between playing in the world and the world of the play, rather as 'a closed field of force' that drew on the characteristics and properties of places and audiences whose capacities

²⁴ Weimann, 1987 (pp.73-85); Weimann, 2000 (pp.180-215); Bruster, Douglas & Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.31-56.

for engagement it had helped produce, as they had helped determine the plays conceived for them.²⁵

Of course the nature of this work was different for players and spectators: players worked through stage logics and practices to engage an audience, and to keep them engaged and entertained. Spectating was (is) practiced, active not passive, a decision made to give attention and to be drawn into an activity: 'the pleasure of the audience is never pure, passive reception; it is the pleasure related to an activity, a series of activities [...] in which, to a degree, it invests itself'.²⁶ Although Ubersfeld goes on to assert that 'theatrical pleasure, properly speaking, is the pleasure of the sign; it is the most semiotic of all pleasures', she makes clear that this pleasure is not simply the product of a reading of the stage, rather the consequence of spectatorly practices that make reading (amongst other things) possible:

Theatrical pleasure is not a solitary pleasure, but is reflected on and reverberates through others [...] One does not go alone to the theatre – one is less happy when alone [...] Theatrical pleasure is multiform; it is made up of all kinds of pleasures, sometimes contradictory ones [...] it is the pleasure of an absence being summoned up (the narrative, the fiction, elsewhere); and it is the pleasure of contemplating a stage reality experienced as concrete activity in which the spectator takes part.²⁷

Every theatrical performance is part of an event which produces its own world (a closed field of force) - which may (or may not) interact with directly or allude to the broader world of which it is part. It is not a choice between two worlds; performance necessarily

²⁵ States, Bert O., *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: on the Phenomenology of Theatre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p.135. The term 'closed field of force' reminds us that 'the highly critical causality of theatre' is not a product of a sequence of stage actions nor of the density of the dialogue, but is born 'of a [singular] world whose every detail is temporally and spatially linked: in short, a world permeated with causality', [States, p.135].

²⁶ Ubersfeld, Anne. "The Pleasure of the Spectator" in *Modern Drama* XXV:1 (1982), 127-139 (p.128).

²⁷ Ubersfeld, p.128-29.

relates primarily to the world of which it is part and is dependent on this for its capacity to mediate knowledge and understandings – in order for it to mean anything at all.²⁸ To appreciate how early modern dramatic production might have worked to produce a theatrical experience grounded not simply in an audience's intellectual and imaginative complicity but in their ability to contribute directly to the activity of production requires an awareness of those stage logics that, in predating the building of the playhouses, would have helped shape their construction and that of the plays conceived for them.

2.3.2 LOGICS OF THE STAGE: FOCUS

Toby Wilsher illustrates how, in mask acting, the actor can, at any point, include or exclude the audience. Performance does not have to choose between inclusive and exclusive modes, both can coexist within a single production:

The actor has a phrase in his or her head that can be shown through a slight gesture, or a movement of the torso, an intake of breath. This can be directed straight to the audience, if [the] convention of 'clocking the audience' is to be used, or it can be done for their own benefit. Once it is finished, the clock closes up and the action continues.²⁹

Such self-contained and collaborative modes of performance are fundamental not only to mask work but to those stage logics which underpin theatre-making more generally – where, for example, an actor can enter, react to something first for himself then for the audience (perhaps, but not necessarily, clocking them) before retreating back from the

²⁸ Other 'worlds' produced in performance are noted by Palfrey and Stern in relation to one actor speaking in rhyming couplets while their partner speaks in blank verse. Though sharing in the action, each character (in this case, Master Humphrey and Luce in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*) creates their own world – which become part of a larger and more complex word of which the performance is part, [Palfrey, Simon, and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007), p.9].

²⁹ Wilsher, Toby, *The Mask Handbook: a Practical Guide*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p.34.

collaborative to a more self-contained mode.³⁰ I refrain from speaking of worlds, for there are no separate worlds being created here – just acting conventions and stage logics creating focus, producing space and establishing a visual narrative weaving actor and audience into a single theatrical and spatial texture.

The practice of ‘clocking the audience’ highlights the actor’s ability to engage and align spectators through claiming and mediating a focus which is both the product and productive of the space of which he is the focus. Focus defines the quality of the space uniting actor and spectator, as it functions dramatically to guide the spectator through a spatially produced visual narrative of performance. However, the spectator is not entirely free in terms of what they look at and how they look at it:

[W]hen the spectator focuses on a sign, it is not because he has been preparing to do so; this focusing is the result of the spectator’s own perception at every moment of the performance. This perceptive operation adds to the pleasure of the image. The tableau is not given whole (nobody can look at all the signs in a single glance); it is constructed bit by bit, and the spectator rejoices in this work of the eye and the ear.³¹

What Ubersfeld fails to account for, however, is how the spectator’s focus is produced and mediated by the stage activity itself. She is right to recognise the deployment of focus as a source of pleasure ‘leaving the spectator with the feeling that his pleasure of seeing has not been exhausted [...] that he could have looked elsewhere, focused on something different’, but more needs to be said of how focus is produced, deployed, and primordially and spatially experienced in the context of dramatic performance.³² Gurr’s ‘three-

³⁰ ‘Clocking’ refers to the actor’s ability to claim focus and to engage an audience by drawing their attention to himself – in this context, by looking directly at them (so that they look at him).

³¹ Ubersfeld, p.130.

³² Ubersfeld, p.131.

dimensional staging' makes sense, but could only have worked if it helped produce focus: if players looked out into the audience to produce the *locus* while others looked away from the audience and into the stage (thereby producing the *platea*), a consequence of this was to produce the *locus* as the focus of the stage and to mediate (through the perspectives of the *platea*-actors) the nature and quality of its reception by the audience.

The conventions of *platea*-acting are deployed by Richard of Gloucester, in *Richard III*, as a means of producing a special intimacy with the audience (a relationship which he drops when he becomes king and moves away from the audience to a more *locus*-centred staging) – a similar pattern is discernable for Iago in *Othello*.³³ Observations about Richard's (and Iago's) stage functions and their indebtedness to a mode of performance associated with the Vice-characters of medieval theatre are not new; however, what is important here is the spatial complexity of these stage functions – for, a more interesting consideration than Richard's intimacy with the audience is what happens when Richard maintains this intimacy whilst, at the same time, also engaging with a *locus*-character who operates entirely within the bounds of the fiction, and who does not acknowledge the audience.³⁴ At these points, the actor playing Richard is called upon to adopt, simultaneously, two positions (one with regard to the action of the *locus*, the other with regard to the audience), and what is discernable is a logic of practice which, in predating modern concerns with realism, is neither constrained by the action of the play nor entirely free of it – instead, the character participates fully in the drama whilst at the same time

³³ Gurr, Andrew, "A New Theatre Historicism" in Holland and Orgel, pp.71-88 (pp.79, 81-2).

³⁴ Weimann, 1987 (pp.149-50 & 159-60); Weimann, 1996b; Righter, Anne, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp.87-91; Palfrey, Simon and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p.9.

(and for the benefit of the audience) constructing a critical perspective on it. Wooing Lady Anne, Richard playfully completes the sense of her lines and controls the focus of the stage (1.2.196-201); but, with its origins in non-representational burlesque and audience awareness, Richard's undermining of her is spatially produced, a product of his unique ability here to operate within the world of the play and outside of it at the same time. Richard's ability to exploit the potentials of both exclusive and collaborative modes of performance enables him to operate on the stage within the fictional world associated with the *locus* and, at the same time, the more detached, critical, world of the audience. Implied by this is an ambivalence in his relationship to the place of the stage – the actor's logics of practice engaging with the formal properties of the place to produce a space experienced by the audience as fun and mischievous, and yet fully implicated in the dramatic illusion. Done for the audience's pleasure, Richard's playfulness culminates in his conquest of Lady Anne, his dismissing of her and her retinue from the stage (1.2.226) and his reclaiming of the focus for himself as he celebrates (from an otherwise empty stage) his spatial potency and ambivalence.

Manfred Wekwerth says that, of all Shakespeare's plays, *Richard III* was the one which posed the greatest problems for Brecht – precisely because he could not reconcile the seeming contradictions in trying 'to depict the great historical murderer, and the audience actually celebrating that'.³⁵

Brecht suspected, though he never knew for sure (he never put this play on) that there wasn't just one character on stage when Richard was on stage, but there were actually two. On the one hand the actor (who gives his opinions and

³⁵ Wekwerth, Manfred, *Brecht Symposium 2000: Brecht/Acting/Directing*, August 2000, Rose Bruford College – quotations from this symposium are drawn from my own personal notes.

criticisms of the characters), on the other the character himself. So that the actor does not identify himself with the character; but rather, from the contradiction between the actor and the character, makes discoveries which lead to entertainment, enjoyment and fun in presentation.³⁶

Brecht's death in 1956 paved the way for Wekwerth to explore Shakespeare's plays in relation to his teacher's theories and practices.³⁷ Wekwerth's application of Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* meant 'not only breaking familiar things apart, but also taking a fresh look at them' – which, in the case of *Richard III*, involved exploring the staging implications of Richard's dual role as both self-contained character 'who gains power and the crown through a coup d'état' within the world of the play, and also 'the "Master of Ceremonies and Jester" of old English folk theatre', a figure through whom 'Richard enters into an alliance with the audience [...] befriending them (even adopting their jargon) [...] inviting them to join him in his experiment'.³⁸ What Wekwerth revealed (which Brecht had 'suspected') were the spatial implications of Richard's dual role – staging Richard as both central to the action and friend of the audience meant that the actor had to use the stage in very particular ways to achieve this. Entering with the army at the start, and delivering his first thirteen lines surrounded by troops, Richard then swept them away, smiled at the audience and jumped off the stage and into the auditorium – from where, leaning against the empty stage, relaxed and casually, he confided with the audience and 'descanted' on

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Wekwerth had been Brecht's production assistant with the Berliner Ensemble since 1951 and, following Brecht's death, went on to become the ensemble's chief director – directing *Richard III* in 1972 and in 1973 at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, then in 1974 at the Schauspielhaus, Zürich. The Berlin production was later filmed before a live audience at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, in 1976 – I am grateful to Prof. Tony Hozier of Rose Bruford College for making a recording of this available to me.

³⁸ "Manfred Wekwerth and Robert Weimann: 'Brecht and Beyond'" in *Redefining Shakespeare: Literary Theory and Theatre Practice in the German Democratic Republic*, ed. by Guntner, J. L., & McLean, A., (New Jersey & London: Associated university Presses, 1998), pp.226-40 (p.229). Wekwerth, Manfred, *Richard III – From the Director's Perspective* (Interview conducted by Werner Heinitz for the Deutsches Theater, Berlin. Translated by Laura Bradley, 28 May 2000).

his own deformity. Richard's spatial ambivalence was thus part of the stage/audience contract established at the very start of Wekwerth's production; Richard's ability to use exclusive and collaborative modes of performance was signalled as being dependent on his capacity to use the space of the stage (and auditorium) for maximum theatrical effect.

Lady Anne's arrival upstage with the funeral cortege (1.2) distanced the audience from the illusionistic drama, establishing a very different relationship with them to that produced by Richard in the previous scene. When Richard then entered and confronted her, he adopted the exclusive mode of performance deployed by Lady Anne, and he fully participated in the self-contained scene; but at key points he also played with it for the audience's amusement. Richard's collaborative practices included parodying her prayers and appeals to heaven by rolling his eyes, his playfulness continued as he acted the perfect gentleman, befriending and wooing her – only then, when she collapsed in his arms and let fall the sword (unable to 'be thy executioner' (1.2.189)), turning his head slowly, away from Lady Anne and towards the audience who laughed at his cheeky, feigned look of innocence. Lady Anne accused Richard as he walked downstage (leaving her centre-stage and unable to see his face), but for the audience he pulled faces that made light of her charges and which elicited their laughter. When she exited, Richard aligned himself once more with the audience, as he moved downstage, leant forward, and confided once more in his friend: 'Was ever woman in this humour woo'd? Was ever woman in this humour won?' (1.2.232-33).

In early modern playing spaces, *platea* practices produced a liminal site which opened up a perspective on the fiction through which the action of the *locus* could be judged. When Old Queen Margaret enters both the play and the space for the first time (1.3.106) she remains outside of the action of the *locus* and, for the duration of 52 lines, she offers a commentary on the action and on Richard. There is no suggestion of collaborative performance possibilities for the *locus*-characters (including Richard) who show no audience awareness, and the action of the *locus* faces outwards and towards the audience. However, Margaret's entrance punctures the centrality and exclusivity of the *locus*, no longer a self-contained space housing the action of the play, it is now experienced from the perspective of the *platea*, through Margaret who looks in from the edges of the stage – from the threshold between the stage and auditorium that makes mediation possible. Margaret does not enjoy the same special relationship with the audience as that enjoyed by Richard, but both deploy a common set of stage practices to produce highly particularised *platea*-perspectives on the action of the *locus*. At such points, though focus is produced by the *locus*, how that is experienced by an audience (its quality and character) is spatially determined through the *platea*-practices of the actors.

Wekwerth had Queen Margaret entering through the auditorium, initially not looking at the audience or establishing a relationship with them, she maintained an intense focus on the stage action, aligning the audience in a critical perspective on it which was underscored by her own sense of scorn and resentment in relation to it:

ELIZABETH [*from the stage*]

I had rather be a country serving maid,
Than a great queen, with this condition,
To be so baited, scorn'd, and stormed at:

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

QUEEN MARGARET [from the auditorium]

And lessen'd be that small, God I beseech Him:

Thy honour, state, and seat is due to me. (1.3.107-12)

As Margaret moved slowly through the audience towards the stage, she began to adopt collaborative performance modes by gesturing and making eye contact with them, increasingly delivering her 'asides' for their benefit – not only expressive of her contempt, these practices were an attempt to engender audience support for her. It was only when Margaret finally climbed onto the stage to intervene directly in the action ('Hear me, you wrangling pirates' [1.3.158]) that she dropped these collaborative practices and was absorbed into the exclusive mode that the stage as a whole was deploying. Wekwerth's treatment of Margaret reveals not only her theatrical function, her capacity for mediating between the audience and the drama of the *locus*, but also how the spatiality of this is determined by practices rather than places – Margaret undermined and critiqued the action of the *locus* from the auditorium, Richard did so from within the *locus* itself (even while holding Lady Anne in his arms).

Olivier's response to Margaret's liminality, in his 1955 film of *Richard III*, was to cut her completely – thus erasing the only character in the play who denies Richard the centrality the play gives him:

Her absence from the film makes Richard emerge as a predatory aberration preying on the naïve and the bewildered, 'a renaissance wolf among medieval sheep'.³⁹

³⁹ Anthony Davies, "The Shakespeare films of Laurence Olivier" in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, ed. by Russell Jackson (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.167-86 (p.182).

Of course, Olivier's purpose was precisely to give Richard the centrality consistent with the demands of filmic coherence and psychological realism (rather than explore the theatrical potentials of a play conceived for a very different medium). The centrality of self that Olivier's film celebrates is dependent on the film erasing those stage and performance practices which relate to a world outside of the illusion of the play. Olivier may 'capture the serio-comical villainy that allows Richard to say the vilest things with a touch of wit, and [...] in asides to the audience [...] make him seem downright likeable, scoundrel that he is', but there is no attempt to encourage a critical attitude to him and to produce that awareness of discrepancy between actor and role that might lead an audience to 'condemn Richard the "killer"' in all his horror [and through this] have their attention directed 'beyond the character to the social system where cruelty and killing are a way of political life'.⁴⁰ Olivier's film (keen to exploit the spectacular widescreen opportunities afforded by the newly developed VistaVision) describes 'the grandeur of evil' and encourages 'a sneaking admiration for the scoundrel, a subversive tug, a shameful desire to be a member of that old Miltonic circle called "the devil's party"'.⁴¹ Wekwerth's East German production knew of no such desire, for his audience and actors knew both the reality of abusive political power and of living in a society where to express that awareness was itself potentially dangerous – perhaps making them, in that sense, analogous to Shakespeare's original audiences (Wekwerth's 1964 Berliner Ensemble production of *Coriolanus* was careful to avoid creating a direct association between

⁴⁰ Rothwell, Kenneth, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: a Century of Film and Television*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.62. Wekwerth, p.1.

⁴¹ Rothwell, pp.63-4.

Coriolanus and Stalin, rather it 'asked the question of whether a "great leader" is not too expensive for most people').⁴²

Shakespeare's *Richard III* was written for playing in both the playhouse and in borrowed locations, but its opening moves articulate an appropriating stage logic descended from the flexible practices of an older dramatic heritage in which focus was established at the outset of a play, typically by a single actor entering the performance space. The solitary occupation of the stage at the start of a play by a single actor did more than initiate the narrative; walking into the performance space enabled the actor to claim ownership of a space from which he could address the audience and draw them into the terms of the play's argument and the texture of the performance – it was the primary means by which focus was initiated and space produced, a necessary practice which began a process of appropriation whose aim was to bring about a temporary authority and dominating character for the performance space itself. *The Trial of Treasure* (chapter 1) begins with a single actor entering to recite an eight-verse summary of the moral lesson of the play; it is only then, having produced focus, that he can pass it to the first character (Lust) who enters singing 'Hey ho we care away let the world pass / For I am as lusty as ever I was' and the action begins.⁴³ Similarly, *Nice Wanton* begins with Prologue's entrance and his warning about a mother who failed to correct her children, he then introduces her son Barnabas, who enters reciting from the Book of Ecclesiastes that 'man is prone to evil from his youth'.⁴⁴ Once again, it is only after having produced a space through initiating

⁴² Manfred Wekwerth in Guntner & McLean pp.229-30.

⁴³ Anon, *The Trial of Treasure*.

⁴⁴ Anon, *Nice Wanton*.

focus that Prologue can pass the focus to a character – which move again begins the action of the play itself.⁴⁵ The solitary entrance at the start of a play initiated a focus which could then be treated in more nuanced ways by the players as the action of the play developed – it was through this handling of the focus that enabled players to produce a range of spatial qualities that implicated their audiences in their construction.⁴⁶

The quality of focus initiated by the solitary actor at the start of the performance was sustained through direct address, and this was a common feature of plays conceived before the emergence of purpose built playhouses. *Mankind* begins with Mercy entering, then:

MERCY

The very Founder and Beginner of *our* first creation,
 Among *us* sinful wretches he oweth to be magnified,
 That for *our* disobedience he had none indignation
 To send his own son to be torn and crucified;
Our obsequious service to him should be applied,
 (*Mankind*, 1-5 - my italics)⁴⁷

‘Our’ and ‘us’ carry anaphoric weight here - as if the speaker and the audience have already established a degree of intimacy with each other, and familiarity with and acceptance of their shared condition. At this point, the theatre event is being moulded by

⁴⁵ Although Bruster and Weimann acknowledge the role of Prologue as both actor and performance, the authority that is adduced for it is still seen as a product of its capacity for mediating ‘the deep gap between the imaginary world and the physically present world of actors and spectators’, [Bruster and Weimann, p.30]. Their focus on ‘two worlds’ obscures the ways by which dramatic performance was encountered as the production of a single world which, especially in this period, freely acknowledged its participation in that ‘physically present world of actors and spectators’. This dissertation argues that, rather than mediate a gap between two worlds, dramatic performance produced and then situated itself in that gap in order to exploit to the full the possibilities afforded by its liminal position.

⁴⁶ Chapter 4 develops a more detailed exploration of both how this handling of focus and production of space was expanded on by plays conceived for performance in the playhouses.

⁴⁷ “*Mankind*” in *Three Late Medieval Morality Plays: Mankind, Everyman, Mundus et Infans*, ed. by G. A. Lester (London: A & C Black, 1981), pp.1-57 (p.3).

the actor's claiming the focus of a broader space that separates the performance space from the place that contains it – facilitated by Mercy's drawing the audience's attention to himself, and encouraging a centripetal movement towards the space of which he is the focus. Even as the audience feels enjoined by the activity and language coming from the performance space, what is actually happening is that the performance space is asserting its right to dictate the terms by which the dramatic performance will work – producing a spatiality that is, in part, the result of the delineation and interactions between two newly-created and oppositional places whereby one (the performance space) is given an authority over the other (effectively marking out the performance space as the author of the focus that will guide the spectators through the performance).

Addressing the audience as 'sovereigns' (13), the actor continues with a direct appeal 'your conditions to rectify [...] to have a remotion [...] That ye may be participable of his retribution' (*Mankind*, 13-16). This pleading marks a shift in attitude and function, the stage now claims an authority which is both moral (pointing towards good and away from bad) and ethical (in that the stage assumes the right to recognise and assert this distinction). There is something not just homiletic but also priestly in this function - as if the stage (and the player/playing that constitutes it as a stage) situates itself as a form of mediation between God and the audience. And it is only now, with this authority claimed, that the character identifies himself:

I have be the very mean of your restitution;
 Mercy is my name, that mourneth for your offence.
(*Mankind*, 17-18)

Situating himself between earth and heaven, Mercy produces a new quality of space – his mediatory role enabling him to urge the audience to

Divert not yourself in time of temptation,
That ye may be acceptable to God at your going hence.
(*Mankind*, 19-20)

Pointing out the audience to themselves as an audience, uniting them with himself, pointing to God and heaven ('your going hence'), pointing to himself as 'the very mean of your restitution' (line 17), Mercy produces a constantly expanding spatiality with himself and the performance space at its centre - drawing the audience in (literally as well as metaphorically) harnessed the energies of the hall/yard/market place and channelled it up to the heavens. The practices of the player initiated the production of a 3-dimensional space which drew on the energetic investments of the spectators – the dynamics of which brought in a fourth dimension: time and the audience's relationship to divinity and eternity. Only now, with the particular quality of space produced, does the action of the play continue and develop as Mercy's preaching is exposed as affected and sententious through Mischief's interruption – at which point the audience is dropped, not to be addressed again until Nought, Nowadays and Newguise exit 136 lines later. The opening of the play functioned, through its construction and mediation of focus, to produce a spatiality experienced by the audience as one of inclusiveness. Once established, the players could withdraw safely into the more self-contained world of the play itself, confident both that the audience had contracted into the terms of the performance and that these terms could be reinforced at any time – either at pre-determined points (such as when Mercy again addresses the audience directly) or through a look, a glance, a movement out into the audience when the situation demanded.

Appropriating the stage to produce a dominance through which the narrative could be communicated is a common feature of plays of this period. *Everyman's* opening space has an initial character and authority denied to that of *Mankind*; here the appropriation of the stage begins before the entry of the first player, with the deployment of properties ranged around the stage:

At one side of the acting area GOODS, concealed within a heap of boxes and bags; At the other side GOOD DEEDS, fettered and weak on the ground, which is strewn with the mutilated books of EVERYMAN's deeds.

*(Everyman, S.D. 0)*⁴⁸

The activity of appropriation continued with the entry of 'GOD, in a high place, and MESSENGER, as prologue' (S.D. 0). An elevated God, behind the action and looking down on his creation, and an onstage Messenger looking out and addressing the audience, produced a more diffused focus: God (in a particularly powerful stage position) drew the audience's attention to himself and claimed a focus which, as he looked down onto his Messenger, he passed onto him – the Messenger being experienced as one whose authority was derived from God.⁴⁹ Though the Messenger, ultimately, had the focus here, he was the focus of a particularly potent space – the added dimension of height giving it a monumental quality through a focus reinforced by and mediated through God.⁵⁰ Dating probably from the end of the 15th century, *Everyman's* opening staging is also highly

⁴⁸ "Everyman" in Lester, p.63.

⁴⁹ Although, in contemporary performance, probably the commonest place for a narrator to be placed is to one side of the stage action, Trestle Theatre Company suggest that placing him behind and above the action is a particularly 'strong position' – from which point he exerts an authority over the stage that allows his 'words to have more directorial input'. Trestle Theatre Company, *Teachers' Pack (Basic Masks)*, 1994, Section C.

⁵⁰ In such a staging arrangement, God is in an especially powerful location. Placed behind and above the stage (and looking down on it) he seems to take on the role of puppeteer. It is a strong position, the audience sees God looking onto the action happening in front of him – their experience is of a space into which God could speak and intervene at any point (giving his words and his presence a sort of dictatorial effect/input).

evocative of how preaching developed in the same period.⁵¹ Not only did the popularity of preaching increase in the 15th century, but the manner of its performance was radically altered through the wide-spread erection of raised and decorated pulpits.⁵² Throughout the 15th and into the 16th centuries, preachers turned raised pulpits into platforms, dominating sites which could exercise their authority not just over congregations but also over the texts and illustrations (and their moral and didactic purposes) around the pulpit bases – whose own authority was thus experienced as derived from the practices of the pulpit above.⁵³ The dynamics of authority at a performance of *Everyman* followed a similar pattern; initial focus was claimed by the character in the scaffold (establishing it as the source of authority), however his ability to pass the focus over the stage meant that the experience of the stage was always a mediated one – the potency of the perspective offered to the audience was contingent on how characters in the scaffold passed, reinforced or denied focus.

As with *Mankind*, *Everyman*'s opening lines address and engage the audience in the activity of theatrical production:

MESSENGER

I pray you all give your audience
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play!
(*Everyman*, 1-3)

⁵¹ *Everyman*'s explanation and demonstration of the role of priests and the sacraments produces a homiletic function for the play – whose teaching is not done so much through direct address as through example and explanation. Lester, pp.xxvi-vii

⁵² Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp.57-8.

⁵³ Duffy, p.58.

The Messenger's reminder to the audience of their sinful condition and its earthly wages (death) concluded with his passing the focus back up to *GOD in a high place* looking down onto the stage:

For ye shall hear how our Heaven King
Calleth every man to a general reckoning,
Give audience, and hear what he doth say!
(*Everyman*, 19-21)

The Messenger's exit here effectively handed the stage and the audience back to God – reinforcing the temporary nature of his own authority. Looking down, over stage and into the audience, God (now the focus of a qualitatively very different space to that which was mediated through the presence and focus of the Messenger) spoke into a space which had been prepared for him, over which he had an especially commanding authority:

I perceive, here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind.
(*Everyman*, 22-23)

These two examples suggest that the fundamental and necessary first act of dramatic performance was one of intervention, as players appropriated and took control of a borrowed space and turned it into a site of production. However, the intensity of this experience (from the spectator's perspective) depended on the interactions between two conflicting orders: that of place and that of practices. Players produced a space whose character they could reinforce, nuance, change, enlarge, subvert, even negate for dramatic effect. However, the purpose of their appropriation had a political charge – which was to take control (which is to say ownership) of the place and to produce a dominant and dominating site for performance. Playing required players to carve out a space from which they could influence and manipulate the space surrounding it and,

temporarily, disseminate dramatic performance's own particular knowledge of the world. Lefebvre notes how dominant space is always a space transformed, one mediated by technology and practice: the embodiment of a master's plan, it is always politically conceived and serves the needs of political power.⁵⁴ A similar pattern is discernible in the development from appropriated to dominant performance space. The intervention by players in a host site diverted it from its normal uses through the introduction of new forms (a platform-stage maybe, a scaffold, boxes, bags and books) and practices which, because of their tactical nature (responsive to local conditions), were flexible enough to accommodate and to bend to their needs the formal properties of whatever site was encountered.

Although the two plays above are plays ideally suited to outdoor playing, their construction and handling of focus is echoed in later plays of the early modern period conceived for indoor playing in equally borrowed and converted spaces. Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece* (1512) was ideal mid-meal entertainment and begins:

A enters and speaks

A. Ah! For God's will,
What mean ye, sirs, to stand so still?
Have ye not eaten and your fill,
And paid nothing therefore?

(*Fulgens and Lucrece*, 1-4)⁵⁵

A continues in this jocular vein; drawing attention to the food just eaten, the wine drunk and the subsequent 'sadness' and lack of activity on the part of the guests/audience was a means whereby his performance acknowledged the place and immediate contexts of

⁵⁴ Lefebvre, pp.164-68.

⁵⁵ "Fulgens and Lucrece" in *Five Pre-Shakespearean Comedies*, ed. by Frederick S. Boas, (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp.1-72 (p.3).

performance whilst, at the same time, setting it at some distance from himself (enabling **A** to produce the performance space itself). **A**'s entrance, as if a guest himself, was the performance's first act of appropriation and spatial production – the nature and quality of which would be influenced by (amongst other things) whether he walked through the guests/audience into a prepared performance space (maybe a stage) or straight into the space (or onto a stage) from a point behind or to the side of it. By carefully pointing out to the audience the place they were occupying, **A** effectively produced his own performance space and turned this into a site of dominance and production, the audience's space into a dominated site of engagement and reception.

After asking after the reason for their supposed melancholy (and, presumably, dealing with any responses) **A** declares 'I am sure here shall be somewhat ado' and that he will not leave until he knows what it will be – at which point:

Enter B

B. Nay nay, hardily, man, I undertake
 No man will such mastries make,
 An it were but for the manner sake:
 Thou mayest tarry by licence
 Among other men and see the play,
 I warrant no man will say thee nay.

(Fulgens and Lucrece, 28-33)

B's entrance further enlarges the space of performance as the focus is not so much passed from **A** to **B** as stolen by **B** from **A**. – **A** now functioning as a point of mediation between the audience and **B**. **B**'s identification of them both as two fellow guests gathered to see a play further complicates the space – the performance space becoming (from the spectator's perspective) a site which treats itself as an extension of the audience's space.

A's willing complicity in this humorous farce enables the two players further to establish the dominance and authority of the stage – and to engage the audience in this process. The players' *platea*-practices reinforced the nature of the *locus* as the *locus*, and effected this through playing practices that aligned the spectators with the players in a playful perspective on the action whilst, at the same time, ushering them over the temporal threshold from pre-performance time to performance time.⁵⁶

A yet more complex spatiality was produced 20 lines later where the text suggests that **A** and **B** turned to and examined the audience. If, previously, players adopted *platea*-positions in order to align the audience, here the players turned themselves into spectators, spectators into players, and audience space into performance space:

A. There is so much nice array
Amongst these gallants nowaday,
That a man shall not lightly
Know a player from another man.
(*Fulgens and Lucrece*, 53-56)

These words and this action do more than merely suggest that the performance space includes the audience's space. The spectator's experience would have been of a space that, whilst emanating from and focused on the stage, was primordially perceived as inclusive of them – as if, at any point, the players could indeed come down off their platform again and stand with the guests looking at the stage and enjoying the action of the *locus*. The production and handling of focus at the start of this interlude produced a spatiality which, always emanating from the practices of the players (rather than the

⁵⁶ The idea of interactions whose purpose is to usher an audience across a threshold of performance is a development of Bruster and Weimann's usage in relation to the role of the Prologue in early modern drama, Bruster and Weimann, pp.31-56.

geographical site of the *locus*), implicated the audience and built them into the texture of performance – it was (to borrow from Merleau Ponty) the flesh of the spectator coming into contact with the flesh of the world, a perception apprehended through the directly-lived spatially-produced experience of an actor/audience relationship.⁵⁷

Another Tudor Interlude, Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (1553), shows something of the development of the spatial movements and spatialities noted in the earlier plays. Though (like *Fulgens and Lucrece*) this was not a play conceived for common playing (being written probably for the boys either at Eton or Westminster), it was intended for performance in borrowed sites, and begins again with a solitary Prologue walking into the performance space and addressing the audience – this time with a rhetorical question that carries a similar anaphoric weight as Mercy's opening of *Mankind*:

PROLOGUE

What creature is in health, either young or old,
But some mirth with modesty will be glad to use –
As we in this interlude shall now unfold?

(*Ralph Roister Doister*, 0.1-3)⁵⁸

Prologue's opening 28 lines of verse assure the audience of the virtue of the entertainment to come, and establishes an authority for the space of performance in relation to the space of the audience. Prologue's curt exit ('And here I take my leave for a certain space' (28)) is immediately followed by the entry of Matthew Merrygreek – initially absorbed by his need to find someone to wine and dine him, he eventually decides to use *Ralph Roister Doister* for this purpose. Most of Merrygreek's 66 lines of rhyming couplets show little awareness of the audience, there is the occasional 'For know ye [...] require

⁵⁷ Merleau-Ponty in Cutrofello, p.77.

⁵⁸ "Ralph Roister Doister" in Boas, pp.113-206.

what ye will [...] ye may esteem him', but, by and large, the sense is of a character already confident enough in the audience's attention and engagement that there is no need to address them more frequently or more directly – his performance not only stages a degree of absorption, it also encourages an absorptive audience. Merrygreek as the solitary point of focus for this lengthy opening produced (despite the potential humour of his lines) an isolated space, at the heart of which was a single, absorbed, actor encouraging an absorptive audience. In terms of its opening spatiality, these opening lines conformed to a form of drama which placed its spectators at a critical distance from the action – from where they could (at least initially) look in and judge.

These dynamics change, however, when Merrygreek decides to seek out Ralph and then (in a move reminiscent of moments such as Death's spying the approach of Everyman) seeing Ralph (absorbed by his sadness) approaching, he stands to one side as Ralph laments his misery – Merrygreek interjects with a commentary (done for the audience's benefit) on Ralph's lines:

ROISTER DOISTER

Come, death, when thou wilt, I am weary of life!

MERRYGREEK

I told you, I, we should woo another wife!

ROISTER DOISTER

Why did God make me such a goodly person?

MERRYGREEK

He is in by the week. We shall have sport anon.

ROISTER DOISTER

Where is my trusty friend, Matthew Merrygreek?

MERRYGREEK

I will make as I saw him not. He doth me seek.

(Ralph Roister Doister, 1.2.1-6)

What is interesting here is not only the way that the transition between scenes is handled (blurring the distinction between them), but the complexity of the space produced by it. Up until this point the stage has been occupied by a solitary (preoccupied) character constructing a single point of focus that has held the audience at something of a distance from the stage action. First Prologue enters, speaks and exits, then Merrygreek enters, speaks, and is about to exit when Ralph appears and Merrygreek decides to stay. Merrygreek's spying of Ralph does more than identify Ralph as a character and announce his arrival, it produces a mediated focus onto the absorbed Ralph – expanding both the performance space and its reach into the audience, and producing a spatiality in which absorption is staged, encouraged and turned into an object of humour as Merrygreek stands back and (through *platea*-practices) draws the audience into his playful relationship with Ralph.

The mediated nature of this focus has important bearings for how the drama was experienced by the audience. Merrygreek's passing of the focus onto Ralph enabled Merrygreek not only to stand between the audience and Ralph (both literally and metaphorically), but to do so from anywhere on stage. Perhaps working more from the edges of the stage (opening up the centre stage areas for Ralph), Merrygreek could wander (at a distance) around Ralph, capping his lines and undermining any potential for sympathy for him. And this distance between Merrygreek and Ralph (and the various ways by which the actors could colour it) was also part of the spatiality experienced by the audience. Like a photographer operating a lens, Merrygreek could exploit the formal properties of the performance space (and audience space) to determine how extensive or

shallow was the depth of field: a position close to Ralph would produce a more shallow depth of field in which the focus on Ralph would be particularly sharp (all else thrown out of focus, so to speak, by Merrygreek's proximity to Ralph); positioned further away from Ralph (perhaps on the fringes of the performance space) Merrygreek would have produced a more extensive depth of field, resulting in a different quality of focus on Ralph – one nuanced by whether Merrygreek mediated the focus from a point between the audience and Ralph or from behind Ralph. *Platea*-practices were not limited to the performance areas closest to the audience – the *platea* went wherever those player(s) went who mediated focus onto the *locus* (indeed, *platea* and *locus* could occupy the same physical space – as happens with Richard of Gloucester and Lady Anne in Wekwerth's production (see pages 86-8).

Something needs to be said here of the relationships between energy and space, and how these are inflected by (and inflect the perception of) focus – for the manner and quality of the players' movements and deportments in the construction and mediation of focus would have had a significant influence on the spatiality produced. Lefebvre defines a living organism as 'an apparatus which, by a variety of means, captures energies active in the vicinity', which enables us not only to survive, but also (through our possession of excess energy – we always have more than we need) to have a degree of leeway in our potential to do more than is required.⁵⁹ 'This surplus or superfluity of energy is what distinguishes life from survival', for we do not simply expend energy, we use it productively in the

⁵⁹ Lefebvre, p.176.

service of work, play, celebration, etc.⁶⁰ We cannot store energy indefinitely, its nature demands that it be expended, and it is this deliberate 'wasting' of energy that produces space – 'the release of energy always gives rise to an effect, to damage, to a change in reality. It modifies space, or generates a new space'.⁶¹ An actor's entrance into and uses of space changes that space and produces a new space precisely through this productive wasting of energy. At the start of the play, the actor playing Merrygreek as highly animated, an open body language centred fairly high, almost on tip-toes (straining to see into the distance), never still (in seemingly perpetual movement) and constantly fidgeting, will produce and inhabit a very particular space – the manner of his expending of energy determining the quality of space experienced by the audience. If Merrygreek uses his energies to 'haunt' that area closest to the audience, this might encourage an audience movement away from the performance space – not through fear, but because Merrygreek's leaning over and into their space 'pours' his energies into that space, challenging the authority of any presumed boundary and reinforcing the dominance of the performance space.⁶² Such actions not only have the potential to extend the space of performance and its sphere of influence, from the perspective of those spectators nearest the action a move away from a highly energised (and therefore potentially volatile, unpredictable and dangerous) space is a use of their own energies to produce and defend their own particular space. The spatiality of the actor is not the same as that of a spectator close to the action (which is not the same as the spatiality of another spectator further

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Lefebvre, p.177.

⁶² It is a pattern of behaviour frequently seen in street theatre – where an audience gathered in a semi-circle around the performance space will instinctively move back when a performer moves towards them.

away from the action who is enjoying – or not – the shifting patterns of movement between the performance space and those spectators nearest it).⁶³

Merrygreek prepares the space which Ralph enters – one which Ralph's entrance and activity (his own expending of energy) alters, complicates and develops further: every second entrance onto a stage is a challenge to a space already produced, a means by which space is modified, developed, new spaces produced. If, in contrast to Merrygreek, Ralph's entrance is sluggish (almost dragging his feet and legs), with a low centre and almost complete absence of bodily tension, the energy seeming to drain slowly out of him (like a battery slowly discharging itself), a closed body language and a noticeable lack of movement (and certainly nothing sudden or unexpected – each movement uniquely prepared for long before it is made), then the space initially produced by Merrygreek will be qualitatively altered. However Merrygreek looks and comments on Ralph (and wherever he does it from), the spectators' experience of this will be as much a product of these contrasting energies as it will the actors' uses of particular stage areas – and in many ways, it is precisely this recognition that exposes the weaknesses in our tendency to approach performance space as a matter of stage geographies: upstage, downstage, *locus*,

⁶³ Paul Prescott observes a tendency amongst critics to justify their criticisms of performances at Shakespeare's Globe precisely because, always seated at a distance from the stage (with the groundlings between them and the stage action), the high visibility of the audience 'interferes' with their desire/need for a single, unhindered point of focus embedded in the world of the play itself. Though Ubersfeld's spectator's noticing of a sign is not the result of a conscious preparation, this is not the case with most critics – who will usually attend a production deliberately looking out for very specific signs, practices and meanings. Prescott, Paul, "Inheriting the Globe: The Reception of Shakespearean Space and Audience in Contemporary Reviewing" in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. by Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp.359-75.

platea, traverse, theatre-in-the-round etc., are not always the best ways of accounting for the spatialities of performance.⁶⁴

As with *Mankind* and *Everyman*, each of *Ralph Roister Doister*'s 28 scenes happens in an outdoor and unspecified location; as unlocalised space, the performance space constantly functioned as a meeting place, a space characterised by encounter and change. Unlike the earlier two plays, where the homiletic need to drive home a point meant that an encounter was as likely to be between stage and audience as between characters, the encounters of *Ralph Roister Doister* are all woven into the internal narrative of the play itself – even when these encounters are prepared for through audience address and engagement. Characters are constantly on their way to/from other places, the play consisting of their encountering others in an exterior world always removed from the locations where 'things are happening' (things which the stage comments on, affects or is a consequence of):

MERRYGREEK

I will seek him out – But, lo! He cometh this way.

(*Ralph Roister Doister*, I.1.64)

Very occasionally, the stage empties of characters – enabling a subsequent entrance to articulate a shift in location:

DOUGHTY

Where is the house I go to? before or behind?

I know not where, nor when, nor how, I shall it find.

(*Ralph Roister Doister*, II.1.1-2)

⁶⁴ Lin, Erika T., "Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann's Concepts of *Locus* and *Platea*" in *New Theatre Quarterly*, 22:3 (2006), 283-98 (pp.286-88).

The flexibility implied (the performance space a sort of neutral place outside the 'real' locations intrinsic to the play's action) facilitated the production of spaces which were always available to be moulded and defined by the entrances, actions, interactions and exits that happened in them. But such fluid and transformational spaces implicated the audience in their construction – as they were variously addressed and confided in by characters seeking to hide from other characters that had just entered (or were about to). Neither 'direct address' or 'aside' describes what was happening theatrically at such points in terms of focus. When characters are alone on stage, the interplay between the stage and the audience is interesting precisely because it is ambiguous the extent to which the audience is being addressed directly, being allowed to hear a character's thoughts, or is being actively encouraged to notice something that has either just happened or is about to happen on stage. Though at such points focus is claimed by the solitary character on stage, his extending of his energies out into the audience space, and then pointing out the character entering (passing on to him what then becomes a mediated focus) shows a stage practice (and theatrical experience) reliant on the capacity to exploit the possibilities of focus for maximum dramatic effect. One potential effect is to produce the audience's complicity in what is about to happen: an onstage character shares his thoughts with the audience as he sees another character entering (absorbed and speaking out loud to himself), the audience are thus expecting an encounter – but how much, in what ways, will the character already onstage be able to exploit the character entering? So much of the audiences' pleasure comes not from their privileged position of knowing more than the character entering, but from the spatial construction, the primordial perception, of this – the character entering being experienced as vulnerable to the character who lies in

wait precisely because he is walking with ignorance into a space that has been set up for him, a space in whose construction the audience has been (delightfully) complicit.

Dobinet Doughty (Ralph's servant) is alone onstage at the end of 2.2. Rather than return to his master empty-handed, he decides to 'tarry here this month' – at which point he sees Truepenny coming and scene three begins (with Truepenny entering, bemoaning his lot and unaware of Doughty's presence). In their opening lines, each speaks for the benefit of the audience, but each produces a different relationship with them – as each constitutes a different object of a focus which they first share before it alternates between them. Truepenny, absorbed, rehearses his woes and his frustration at the fickleness of the women he has just left; but his lines, suggestive of him speaking for and to himself, isolates him both from the audience and Doughty – making him vulnerable to Doughty (as if walking into a trap), a sense underlined by Doughty's 'Whether is it better that I speak to him first, Or first he to me?' (2.3.9-10). The question is rhetorical – inviting the audience in, Doughty encourages an audience complicity in his scheming that becomes a significant feature of a play wherein characters alone on stage at the ends of scenes produce privileged spaces in which they can exploit the ignorance and vulnerabilities of the characters entering.

Truepenny is experienced by the audience as no simple victim of Doughty, the relationships between them (and between them and the audience) become further complicated when Truepenny notices Doughty: 'What boy have we yonder? I will see what he is' (2.3.13). Again, a question initiates the shift in the stage/audience relationship and

the spatiality produced – and a focus which was mediated through Doughty onto Truepenny is split, the audience asked to notice both characters looking at each other (each asking them to look at the other from their perspective). This playful use of focus creates a rich and constantly shifting spatiality – the product of stage practices that encourage a sense of expectation, locating the audience in relation to the action and sharpening their sense of involvement in it. Questions are frequently used to help produce spaces and effect the transitions between them; scenes often begin with a character entering alone, already absorbed by something, and asking a question:

- What creature is in health [...]? (*Prologue*)
- Who took thee this letter, Margery Mumblecrust? (1.5)
- Where is the house I go to? before or behind? (2.1)
- What is a gentleman but his word and his promise? (3.5)
- Is there any man but I [...]? (4.1)
- But what stranger is this which doth to me appear? (4.2)
- What mean these lewd fellows thus to trouble me still? (4.3)

These points of transition suggest a flexible mode of performance capable (especially in the overlaps between entrances/exits, endings/beginnings of scenes) of creating and mediating a focus that could expand and contract to produce transformational spaces encountered by audiences whose sense of involvement was essential to the spatial construction: focus was always a mediated focus, constructed with a view to how it would be received and experienced by its audience. Merrygreek's sporting with Ralph in 1.2 is prepared for at the end of the scene 1.1, but the staging of this was a matter of focus that, produced for the audience's benefit, aligned them in a particular perspective on Ralph – though they were encouraged to experience Ralph from the perspective of Merrygreek, the embodied perception of this by the spectator would have been a matter not so much of what the characters said or how they behaved, rather the qualities of space they

produced in the contexts of performance. The construction and mediation of focus was more than a visual narrative of performance, it was a primary means of spatial production – carrying the possibility for the construction of multiple (complementary and contradictory) perspectives and forms of audience engagement that the plays conceived for performance on the thrust stages of the first playhouses would go on to develop in yet more complex ways.

2.3.3 LOGICS OF THE STAGE: BALANCE

Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors [...] This pre-existence of space conditions the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance; yet the subject's presence, action and discourse, at the same time as they presuppose this space, also negate it [...] Thus the *texture* of space affords opportunities not only to social acts with no particular place in it and no particular link with it, but also to a social practice that it does indeed determine.⁶⁵

Lefebvre speaks of a 'texture' that is experienced by its producers 'as an obstacle, as a resistant "objectivity"'.⁶⁶ In the contexts of dramatic production there are multiple resistances operating simultaneously, produced by multiple users, actors and spectators (which, partly, accounts for how the same place is experienced differently by different people at the same time.) Actors work with or against the logics of the built space of the stage in relation to the built space of the audience – who work with (or against) the logics of the audience space in relation to the stage.⁶⁷ For an actor walking onto an empty stage, there is a space already there to be worked (a word which is itself deeply suggestive of this encounter between two different orders), a space which the actor's entry changes. But, for an audience, the empty stage is a place, and their expectations are that the

⁶⁵ Lefebvre, p.57.

⁶⁶ Lefebvre, p.57.

⁶⁷ Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: The MIT Press, 1996), pp.121-37.

actor(s) will work not in it but with and against it – the actors’ practices turning the place into a space.⁶⁸ Focus is one means by which performance space is produced, this section notes the instrumental role of balance in the production of dramatic space. A reliance on discursive logics afforded by topographical stage readings makes difficult understandings born of stage logics that cannot be so neatly summed up (pinned down by) language. Gurr calls for an optimal and imaginative approach to early modern staging that seeks to open up a broader appreciation of the possibilities for early modern performance.⁶⁹ Stage practices bring about balanced and unbalanced stages (producing a range of spatial experiences for spectators) and it is these that are examined now.

A bare stage is a balanced stage – in the sense that it presents an equilibrium that the entry of the players will disturb and play with. In the above plays, the entrances of Prologue, Mercy, God, his Messenger and **A** unbalanced it – the first step of the player onto a balanced stage was a transgression of its rules, a contradiction, as the player’s logics of practice encountered the logics of place, intervening to produce a space (whose quality would have been nuanced also by the physicality and style of movement of this first entrance). The player’s movement into and through the space expended energy in it and so altered it – turning it into a site of production as the actor worked to maintain a new quality of balance. It was not simply one order (that of bodies) intervening in another (built spaces) and disrupting it, the release of energy transformed a place into an actively produced, lived space apprehended through experience (producing the quality of space in

⁶⁸ de Certeau, p.117. I would argue that this was especially true in the early modern period, when audiences fully expected to be contracted into a dramatic performance by players actively engaging them.

⁶⁹ Gurr, 2001 (p.59).

and through which the lines were delivered). Accounts which speak largely in terms of upstage entrances and downstage deliveries fail to communicate the primordial and embodied reality of this experience.⁷⁰

Theatrical stages prior to the first playhouses were appropriated spaces – produced by the practices of the players interacting with the physical properties, characteristics and behaviours of their places of performance. If the entrance of the first player produced the drama's first point of focus, then the experience of this was a matter of balance produced by the centripetal force of his entry – drawing the audience in located the player as the focus of a space whose character was partly shaped by an audience's inward investment of movement towards, and around, it. From the player's perspective, the audience (physically beyond the boundaries of the performance space) needed to be pulled in, as it were, like a fish on the end of a line. There were no divisions, as yet, in this audience – one of the actor's first jobs was to create the conditions through which a group of individuals would feel itself to be a homogeneous entity with the single, unifying identity and function of an audience (even if the performance itself went on to exploit different sections of that audience).

⁷⁰ At a workshop in 1994 with Barry Rutter (of Northern Broadsides) at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Rutter demonstrated how his actors always entered the space energised. For him, space had to be produced before lines could be spoken. Actors entered with energy and began their lines while still moving – the energy of their movement spilling out into the delivery of the lines (which became extensions of the movement). He explained how this was particularly important when performing on bare stages, where there is the need to find an energy for the line capable of transforming the space itself. One of the weaknesses of Palfrey and Stern's approaches to the performance of Shakespeare's parts is the fact that they do not engage with the fact that most entrances would have been into spaces already textured by the practices of the onstage actors – whose movements, stage distributions and varying relationships with their audiences would have produced spaces the actor entering would have had to sense and make sense of through an intuition born of experience, [Palfrey and Stern, 2007].

This need to 'pull in' an audience is particularly necessary in theatrical production which, without the aids of representational scenery, sophisticated lighting and sound, and other technological interventions is heavily dependent on the audience's imagination for its construction. Berkoff (speaking in the contexts of a similarly body-centred theatre) likens the audience's imagination to a 'great rambling whale [...] that must be harpooned by the controlled imagination from the stage [...] By leaving space for the spectator, by eliminating the junk of sets and crowded detail of over explained narrative, in other words by freeing the stage and giving it space the spectator can become part of it and is linked to the events by the demands of his imagination that is interpreting for itself what is happening'.⁷¹ For Berkoff, the participatory role for the spectator that this theatre creates defines its success as it 'makes demands on him to "read" our symbols' and to derive pleasure from so doing.⁷² Similar demands were placed on early modern spectators – requiring the players to open up the sites of performance to the spectators' imaginations through performance practices which made creative, suggestive and aesthetically pleasing uses of their places of performance.

For the early modern player, unifying and 'pulling in' the audience required producing a unified space they could both inhabit: balance was essential to this. There was no single way by which this could be done, each performance required the players to work within the localised conditions that constituted a particular place and event. Balance is a logic of practice, a logic of bodies intervening in the logic of built space in an elusive, intuitive but

⁷¹ Berkoff, Stephen, "Introduction to Poe and Performance" in *Agamemnon & The Fall of the House of Usher* (Oxford: Amber Lane Press, 1990), pp.38-9.

⁷² Ibid.

rational way. Here I want to suggest two different beginnings for *Mankind*, each of which would create focus through the player's working with balance, but each producing different spatialities. The purpose is not to offer up either of these as a definitive account of how the opening of *Mankind* was actually staged, but to note how these two hypothetical (but plausible) openings balance the space in different ways, and how creating balance is an actorly practice productive of the spaces that the audience experiences, and intrinsic to and determinative of the meanings they derive from it. Predating a theatre tradition shaped by the privileged interventions and perspectives of a director concerned for a self-contained, unified stage and a removed and passive audience, this dissertation argues that they offer plausible explanations of how dramatic presentation would have worked in practice in the late medieval and early modern periods.⁷³

i. Mercy enters UR, looking out over the audience. He proceeds to a point CS, where he stops and begins his lines. He speaks looking directly into the audience and making eye contact with them. His body language is open, perhaps some gesturing towards the audience. He shifts from this central point and moves along the edge of the stage to his right (reaching its furthest point). He stands there, facing out at 45°. After a while he turns so that he is looking directly out once more, he seems to see as if for the first time the audience arranged around the opposite downstage corner. He continues, his lines addressed primarily to this section of the audience, as he moves along the DS edge towards them. On his way he notices some potential spectators on the fringes of the audience space, he looks out and speaks to them (over the tops of the heads of his actual

⁷³ For the purposes of this illustration I have assumed the use of an outdoor booth stage in a public place.

audience), pulling them in – an invitation. On reaching the corner DSL, Mercy stops and, speaking to the audience from there, retreats backwards (still facing front) until he is directly CS once more. It feels as though he has reached his final stage destination; but then, as his advising and entreating become more heightened, he moves again DC. He is there, on the edge of the stage, when Mischief pokes his head from behind the curtained entrance UL and (as if Mercy has woken him from his sleep) interrupts and berates him. Mercy turns to face him as Mischief emerges from behind the curtain and walks past him (crossing the stage on a diagonal) to a position DR and to the right of Mercy – who, as Mischief crosses the stage, balances the space by moving DL (from where the interaction continues).

ii. Mercy appears UR. He stays there, stationary, looking directly into the audience. Sensing the crowd's attention, he looks down to the stage beneath his feet, then at the empty expanse of stage between himself and the audience. He looks up, then, beginning at that corner UR, he walks along the edge of the stage towards the DR corner (cautiously at first, then gradually increasing in confidence). As he moves, he looks into the audience along that side of the stage. When he reaches the DS corner, he stops, looks out across the audience and begins his lines. Continuing to face front, he moves to a point CS, then to the other corner DL. His final lines of this opening section are delivered as he walks towards the exit UL. He is about to exit when in bursts Mischief – who pushes him aggressively to the floor and occupies the DS area nearest the audience. His volatility forces Mercy to stay in the more removed area US – perhaps still grovelling on the floor, too frightened to get up lest that be interpreted by Mischief as provocative. The interactions between them are

produced through Mischief (speaking his lines to the audience) occupying and moving around in the corridors of space on the 3 sides of the platform, while Mercy (pinned down in the CS area) addresses his lines directly to Mischief.

In the first example, from his first appearance Mercy exudes an authority in relation to the stage – as if the stage is a territory over which he already exercises his rule. That he does not look at it, notice it or point it out to his audience in any way (it seems to emanate from him) produces the stage as his, an extension of him. His walking through the space DC (the focus remaining on him) fails to disturb the space – gliding through the stage, he is like a boat gliding through water (it seems to support rather than part for him). His arrival DC rebalances the stage: located on its boundary with the audience (the stage stretching out behind him), Mercy not only balances the space of the stage but also that of the stage/audience space as a whole. His subsequent moves around the stage highlight and reinforce its strongest points (the DS corners, the edges, the CS area – themselves the product of a geometry experienced as balance), and establish these as liminal points of contact between the stage and the audience. From here he can see and reach out to anyone – like an emperor, even those on the furthest edges of his kingdom exist under his authority, and his call is to them as much as those gathered around the stage. What is at work here is a space over which Mercy has an authority perceived as natural: he does not need to do much in or with it – in fact, the less he does the more the space is ‘naturally’ his. Occupying and moving between its strong points keeps both the stage space and the stage/audience space balanced – his control of the focus articulating the logics of the space.

The sudden and unexpected appearance of Mischief UL disturbs Mercy's preaching and punctures the space. The immediate effect is to unbalance the space, as Mischief steals the focus and undermines the authority of Mercy which was itself a product of his relationship to the space. Mischief's movement across the stage further undermines Mercy's authoritative relationship to the stage space (and of the relationship between the stage and the audience). Mischief's entry slashes at the spatiality so carefully produced by Mercy, and Mercy is powerless to intervene. But, theatrically, balance is maintained: Mercy backing away from Mischief as they move into opposite DS corners articulates a stage logic whereby the actors work intuitively and collaboratively to produce a single space that is perceived as such by the audience – resulting in a new spatiality in which the comic DS interactions between Mischief and Mercy take on something of the to-ing and fro-ing of a tennis match.

In the second example, the initial space produced through Mercy's attention to it, the audience and the physical distance between them, is more ambiguous (but no less balanced) than that of the first example. A space that Mercy clearly feels he has reasons to be fearful of, the suggestion is that it is one already loaded with history – his inspection of the space invests it with significance. Surveying the stage first, then choosing not to walk into it but round it, marks it out as a potentially dangerous space – but movement that clings to its edges creates balance as it produces and articulates the boundaries of that space. Mercy's discernible growth in confidence makes him an engaging character, and though he draws strength from staying on the boundary of an increasingly interesting space, activity which separates the main stage space from the audience increases their

expectations in relation to the stage as a whole – the space Mercy is visibly avoiding (thereby so visibly pointing out) is being prepared as a site of future (potentially imminent) action. Mischief's bursting into that space gives him an authority in relation to it – and the audience senses why Mercy is so cautious.

It is the players' logics of practice which produce the space such that Mischief (looking out into the audience) takes the focus, which is mediated on to him through Mercy (who is like an animal trapped by a predator). The stage remains balanced: Mischief roaming round the edges gives him a power and authority denied to Mercy, his movement reinforces the boundary between the stage and the audience and establishes the work that Mercy began – producing these corridors as a liminal space of contact between stage and auditorium. Mischief's movement pins Mercy down, restricts him and makes him his prey, and this is achieved through pouring an energy and movement into the corridors that qualifies the stillness CS (a sense which is also encouraged by Mercy addressing his lines directly to Mischief and from floor level). The effect is one of balance, as an audience arranged around the platform is enjoined by Mischief to look at him toying with an isolated Mercy who occupies that place at the still point – which is the very centre of this balance.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the stage and performance practices available to the early modern player, practices that could assist him in appropriating his places of performance and respond tactically to engage his audiences. Although the actual deployment of these practices is hypothetical and the performances described

conjectural, these logics of practice (as subsequent chapters, especially chapter 4, go on to demonstrate further) offer plausible explanations of how actors work through a range of non-discursive stage logic to produce coherent, meaningful and engaging performances. In the examples given above, balance is intuitively produced and experienced. Intrinsic to the aesthetics of performance, articulating a logic of practice that, lying outside the realm of conventional discursive logics, is entirely rational and consistent, the players' movements here are clearly neither illogical nor irrational (nor are they determined by pre-conceived through-lines and the demands of psychological truth and self-consistency – in short, the consequence of, and responsive to, discursive logics), yet they create viable aesthetic spaces capable of communicating powerful and complex ideas. Such logics of practice as balance and focus, this chapter argues, were elemental to the staging practices of the late medieval and early modern periods. In a period prior to the emergence of the first playhouses, when dramatic production needed to work both to produce and keep an audience (let alone, very often, get them to part with their money), the players' tools were those logics that enabled them to seize hold of a place from which they could produce the spaces that constituted dramatic production. When drama moved into its own purpose-built places, it did not suddenly drop the performance and spectating practices that were necessary for dramatic production on flexible stages in borrowed places. These practices (and their underlying logics) continued to influence the production of plays in playhouses, which (like the plays written for them) were dialogically conceived with such practices and logics in mind.

CHAPTER 3

ROGUES, COZENERS AND COMMON PLAYING: THE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF DECEPTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a detailed examination of a number of early modern rogue and cony-catching texts for the performance practices they reveal, noting how these relate to their characters' tactical uses of other people's places. In an age when one of the most frequent complaints against common playing was its threat to public order, this chapter suggests that this related to a capacity players shared with rogues and cozeners – the tactical ability to turn stable places into unstable spaces with the capacity to draw people away from the sanctioned practices of everyday life. Through a detailed examination of key moments in Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Comedy of Errors*, this chapter explores how theatrical production's fascination with the staging of cozenage related to its own (elusive and protean) nature as a form of trickery. These plays, their composition spanning 10 years, betray a growing fascination with the practices of cozenage and trickery, they also represent theatre's growing confidence in its own ability to stage trickery and turn it to its own, highly profitable, advantage.

Jean Howard describes the anti-theatrical tracts of the early modern period as 'a genre of anxiety' – a social (rather than textual) phenomena participating in and articulating a network of fears and concerns about theatre practices.¹ The rogue and cony-catching

¹ Howard, Jean, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) p.23.

literature of mid- to late-Tudor and early Jacobean England offers something similar, a wide-ranging critique of and commentary on vagrancy. Though primarily a mode of entertainment (participating in a very different market to the anti-theatrical tracts), the texts participated in a debate on idleness, on what constituted legitimate and illegitimate vagrancy, and on the relationships between places, practices and the production of space. The texts present roguery and cozenage as particular forms of vagrancy characterised by their nature as performance – which, like common playing, made particular (and transgressive) uses of other people's spaces. The rogue texts exposed and maligned practices which the cony-catching pamphlets then translated into popular fiction for a growing London readership – practices which would find another, popular, expression in the dramatic performances of common players. Those condemned and criminalised by the anti-vagrancy legislation were characterised by their lack of a fixed place and their need to appropriate public spaces, it was this that caused them to be seen as 'irregular, disordered and potentially subversive because uncontrollable'.² Rogues, cozeners and players shared a similar protean nature, one that was only authorised (i.e. legitimate) when licensed, so that unauthorised playing equalled unauthorised begging: not only deception, but a contravention of the legitimate rules of space and place. The anti-vagrancy legislation aimed to eliminate (the rogue and cony-catching literature to debunk) those who used their protean quality for personal, economic gain, who operated outside the legitimate spatial economies by appropriating places for immediate material advantage.³

² Pugliatti, Paola, *Beggary and Theatre in Early Modern England* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), p.2.

³ Pugliatti, pp.7-8.

3.2 THE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF ROGUES AND COZENERS

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

When, around 1609, Autolycus stepped onto the Globe stage singing ‘And when I wander here and there, I then do most go right’ (4.3.17-8) his performance, though drawing on a number of contemporary anxieties about vagrants, yet largely nullified these through a presentation that drew on a popular and well established image of the rogue as ‘the merry beggar’, free from the constraints of ‘the new civic ideal of propriety and domestic order’.⁴ The preceding 50 years had witnessed the growth and development of a literature of vagabondage which, as well as presenting vagabondage as a threat, had also ‘construct[-ed] a readership whose fantasies of freedom and social being were shaped by images of the itinerant vagabond and his or her expressions of resistance, rivalry, and mutual comradeship’.⁵ The imaginative complicity implied by this was especially fruitful in the playhouses, where the staged performances of rogues (such as Autolycus and Bardolph), and other transgressive characters (such as Hal and Falstaff, Poor Tom and even King Lear himself), ‘defined a new interpretation of the discursive function of the rogue as a complex mediation of early modern social governance and domestic management’ – and made the experience of this deeply pleasurable.⁶ However, Autolycus’s Globe performance took place on a stage and in a building already 10 years old and well established. His entrance was a claiming of the focus that enabled him to help

⁴ Carroll, William C., *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) p.63 & Dionne, Craig, “Fashioning Outlaws: The Early Modern Rogue and Urban Culture” in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, ed. by Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006) pp.33-61 (p.39). Though characters such as Hal, Falstaff, Poor Tom and Lear are not depicted as the sorts rogues found in the rogue literature, they do take on some of their characteristics – they are rootless, are identified with the outdoors, and are materially dependent on others for their survival (requiring them to steal, borrow, beg or accept charity).

⁵ Dionne and Mentz, p.39.

⁶ Dionne and Mentz, p.38.

produce the space of Bohemia (whose texture was, comically, nuanced by references to familiar localised rogue practices); but this performance was not so much an act of appropriation as one of domination – part of the means by which the relatively new cultural industry of commercial, professional theatre, produced itself in the context of its purpose built playhouses. Part of a staging practice shaped and determined by the unique internal architectural arrangement of the Globe playhouse, Autolycus was precisely not free ‘to wander here and there’ but was very obviously constrained by the building (even as the actor gave delight in exploiting the theatrical opportunities it gave him).

Although part of a long tradition in Europe of publications on vagrants, Pugliatti distinguishes between the earlier rogue pamphlets (written by non-professional writers, and concerned more with life in rural and provincial locations) and the later cony-catching pamphlets (written largely by professional writers, normally playwrights, and concerned more with crowded locations in the metropolis).⁷ In the former, rogues are characterised by their tendency to adopt disguises to make them look more wretched than they are, and are depicted as working with boldness, imposture or force – largely for food.⁸ By contrast, cony-catchers adopt costumes in order to appear higher bred (and so unrelated to the criminal underclass) and tend to work ‘through inventive and elaborate schemes’ – largely

⁷ Pugliatti, pp.125-30 & Kinney, Arthur F., *Rogues, Vagabonds & Sturdy Beggars: a New Gallery of Tudor and Early Stuart Rogue Literature* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990) p.39. Craig Dionne, situates the cony-catching texts ‘next to those other literatures that helped promote a distinctly mercantile cultural ideal’ and notes their contribution to the promotion of a sense of cohesion that was specifically urban and related to the growth of ‘the emerging modern metropolis’ [Dionne and Mentz, p.41]. Robert Henke explores ‘homologies of poverty’ in the period across Europe, and the function and nature of poverty’s representation in the work of Ruzante and Shakespeare [Henke, Robert, “Comparing Poverty: Fictions of a ‘Poor Theatre’ in Ruzante and Shakespeare” in *Comparative Drama* 41:2 (Summer 2007) 193-217].

⁸ Pugliatti, pp.126-27.

for money.⁹ If the former are related to an older exchange economy, the latter are related to the ‘mentality of commercial capitalism’ with which, by the latter decades of the sixteenth century, London had become associated.¹⁰ Although responding to different cultural and social pressures, both literatures share a tendency to depict false beggars and cozeners as deeply attached to their practices and refusing to participate in legitimate forms of employment. According to the literature, both rogues and cozeners relied on trickery to achieve their ends, fundamental to which was their ability tactically to appropriate and use public and private places for personal advantage. It is to those spatial practices described by the pamphlets, upon which successful trickery depended, that this chapter now turns – my purpose is not so much to take them on face value as accurate descriptions of what actually happened in early modern England, rather to note the ways by which the literature articulates anxieties about the nature and production of social space.

3.2.2 ROGUERY AS SPATIAL PRACTICE

Thomas Harman’s *A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1566) presents a personalised and detailed account of a number of different types of vagrants through anecdotes, descriptions, stories and lists. In his opening dedication and epistle to the reader, Harman makes clear that his ‘duty to acquaint your goodness with the abominable, wicked, and detestable behaviour of all these rowsey, ragged rabblement of rakeshells’ is founded on an anxiety over their ability to move freely from place to place:

⁹ Kinney, 1990 (p.39). Pugliatti, pp.126-27. Paul Griffiths’ accounts of a number of instances of cozenage demonstrates ‘cony-catching [as] a money-spinning “art”’ [Griffiths, Paul, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime and Control in the Capital City 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.169.

¹⁰ Pugliatti, p.127.

‘vagrants and sturdy vagabonds [pass] through and by all parts of this famous isle, most idly and wickedly [gaining] great alms in all places where they wilily wander’ – indeed, Harman’s choice of the term cursitors (instead of vagrants) is based on his perception of them ‘as runners or rangers about the country’.¹¹ But this perception of vagrants as transgressive precisely because of their fluid relations to places is only possible because Harman writes from a fixed place – enabling him to present his own identity as stable whilst at the same time destabilising the identities of those who, nomadically (according to Harman), wander the land. The rogues he describes are always perceived from the privileged (because fixed) location of ‘a poor gentleman, [having] kept house these twenty years’, whose illness has enabled him ‘to tarry and remain at home [and] by my there abiding, talk and confer daily with many of these wily wanderers [...] by whom I have gathered and understand their deep dissimulation and detestable dealing’.¹² Harman’s vantage point provides the place from which he can speak, authorising his claims, validating his knowledge and producing his expertise – the port wherein he has ‘rigged the ship of knowledge [...] that she may safely pass about and through all parts of this noble realm’.¹³ At frequent points in the pamphlet Harman invokes this place, reminding the reader of the perspective being offered, but also reinforcing the authority of the claims being made:

The ruffler [is related to] my tenant [...] I had of late, the wild rogue [to] a poor neighbour of mine, the prigger of prancers [to] a Gentleman, a very friend of mine,

¹¹ Harman, Thomas, “A Caveat for Common Cursitors (1566)” in Kinney, Arthur F., *Rogues, Vagabonds & Sturdy Beggars: a New Gallery of Tudor and Early Stuart Rogue Literature* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp.103-53 (pp.109 & 113).

¹² Kinney, 1990 (p.110).

¹³ *ibid.* Harman’s own practice here articulates the strategies of the powerful – those who carve out localised places for themselves which function as strongholds from where they can look down, order and organise society’s over-arching structures, de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984) p.8.

riding [...] homeward into Kent, [the] frater [to] an honest man [who] repaired to my house to common with me about certain affairs, [the] bawdy basket [to] a very miserable man [who] came to my gate the last summer, *Anno Domini* 1566, [...] doxies [to] one not long since [...] that came to my gate.¹⁴

The landscape that Harman looks out on, which his vagrants use and exploit, is the rural, open territory of public space and the private places it contains. Lacking their own places, it is the terrain available to vagrants whose practices convert countryside, woods, highways, barns, ale-houses, markets and fairs into unstable, unpredictable (but highly profitable) sites of deception – temporary spaces in which unsuspecting citizens are conned out of food, money or other goods. Two ‘rufflers’ accost a man ‘as he was coming homeward on Blackheath, at the end thereof next to Shooter’s Hill’, from there they escort him and engage him in conversation until they come to the brow of a hill – ‘where these rufflers might well behold the coast around them’.¹⁵ From there they ‘leadeth him into the wood, and demandeth of him what and how much money he had in his purse’, there he is robbed – ‘and therewith [they] went their way, and left the old man in the wood doing him no more harm’.¹⁶ ‘Upright men’ hide in ‘woods, great thickets, and other rough corners where they lie lurking’ and from where they can ‘either rob some seely man or woman by the highway’.¹⁷ The ‘Demander for Glimmer’ relies on an anonymity produced through her begging in a shire other than her own (bringing with her ‘feigned licenses and counterfeited writings, having the hands and seals of such gentlemen as dwelleth near to the place where they feign themselves to have been burnt and their

¹⁴ Kinney, 1990 (pp.115, 124, 126, 137, 143).

¹⁵ Kinney, 1990 (p.116).

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Kinney, 1990 (p.118).

goods consumed with fire’).¹⁸ A ‘Wild Rogue’ is one born into vagrancy, and is wholly identified with outlying areas, barns and woods.¹⁹ ‘Whipjacks’ spread out from coastal towns through the south of England – from where they could play upon their supposed losses at sea.²⁰ Harman finishes with a description of how ‘all Morts and Doxies’ operate at night to purloin barns and outhouses and turn them into temporary lodgings for themselves and their men.²¹ Carried out by those who turned mimetic talent to personal gain, the deceptive practices described by Harman are all usurpations of the legitimate rules of place – a perception of transgression made possible through the fixity of Harman’s own stable position in relation to it.

Though Harman writes from the perspective of a fixed place, much of the authority for his claims is derived from his numerous appeals to and uses of London as an urban, and more ordered, backdrop to the stories he tells. As a private citizen, Harman’s ‘concerns focused on London’ (where he enjoyed a number of high offices); however, as the author of the *Caveat* (where most of the incidents relate to Kent) Harman demonstrates a repeated concern to invoke London not only as a backdrop to his stories, but to substantiate and validate what he asserts through them about the nature and production of legitimate/-illegitimate social space.²² London is used by Harman as the place against which the veracity of his claims is tested and authorized; it is the place from which rogues enter, into

¹⁸ Kinney, 1990 (p.134).

¹⁹ Kinney, 1990 (pp.23-4). Morts and Doxies are cant terms for female vagabonds – morts being women who operate as rogues in their own right (or in collusion with men), doxies being those ‘broken and spoiled of their maidenhead by the upright men [...] and afterward, she is common and indifferent for any that will use her’ [Kinney, p.143].

²⁰ Kinney, 1990 (pp.128).

²¹ Kinney, 1990 (pp.144-45).

²² Beier, A. L., “New Historicism, Historical Context and the Literature of Roguery: the Case of Thomas Harman Reopened” in Dionne and Mentz (pp.98-119) p.112.

and through which they exit, and in which they practice their art and encounter (or evade) justice. Harman's acquaintance was returning from London when he was encountered by the two 'Rufflers' who led him into the woods and robbed him.²³ Another neighbour was similarly 'riding homeward from London where he had made his market' when he was tricked and robbed by 'a Wild Rogue'.²⁴ 'A very Gentleman friend of mine, riding from London homeward into Kent' was there tricked out of his horse by a 'Prigger of Prancers'.²⁵ It was to the tinkers of London (in Southwark, Kent Street and Barmsey Street) and the Thames watermen that Harman sent his man to warn them to be on the lookout for his stolen cauldron.²⁶ 'Abraham men [...] have been kept either in Bedlam or in some other prison'.²⁷ 'Whipjacks [...] come into Wiltshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, and so to London, and down by the river [...] and so into Kent'.²⁸ 'Morts and Doxies' turn barns and outhouses into comfortable lodgings that Harman locates in a web surrounding the capital – from where 'their chief houses near about London, [they] may repair freely at all times'.²⁹ A major part of Harman's purpose is to demonise criminality and poverty – and his conflation of the two articulates a perception that it was in their rootlessness and wandering, their refusal to be bound by and to places, that caused vagrants to be feared and abhorred. Harman deliberately exploits 'the ambivalent apprehensions the metropolitan environment was perpetually prone to' in order to hold it up against his own county of Kent and to use the capital's 'topography of

²³ Kinney, 1990 (p.115).

²⁴ Kinney, 1990 (p.124).

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Kinney, 1990 (p.119).

²⁷ Kinney, 1990 (p.127).

²⁸ Kinney, 1990 (p.128).

²⁹ Kinney, 1990 (p.145).

ambiguity, incontinenances and proximities' to 'other' those who are the subject of his pamphlet.³⁰

The inter-relationships between Haman's localised Kent and London's more fluid spatial texture are discernible in stories such as that of the 'Counterfeit Crank' – in which London (with its ease of access and egress) provides opportunities both for the vagrant and Harman to turn situations to personal advantage (in Harman's case, to present himself as a worthy benefactor of the legitimate poor). According to Harman, for the Counterfeit Crank, London provides a potentially lucrative setting for his performance – 'under my lodgings at the Whitefriars, within the cloister in a little yard or court [...] whereby he hoped for greater gain'.³¹ Challenged by Harman as to how he came to be 'so berayed with dirt and mire', the man uses the place he finds himself in by claiming that he 'fell down on the backside here in the foul lane hard by the waterside, and there I lay almost all night, and have bled almost all the blood out of my body'.³² Harman's response immediately attempts to identify the Crank in relation to place: 'Then I asked of him where he had been born [...] and what time he had been here about London, and in what place'.³³ Informed by the Crank that he had spent time in Bedlam, Harman immediately exploits the proximity of that place to his lodgings and sends his servant to find out whether or not this is true. On finding that it is not, and the Crank now gone (and so proved a 'Counterfeit'), Harman initiates a lengthy chase through London's parishes and

³⁰ Hansen, Adam, "Sin City and the "Urban Condom": Rogues, Writing, and the Early Modern Urban Environment" in Dionne and Mentz (pp.213-239), p.213.

³¹ Kinney, p.129.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

suburbs in an attempt to apprehend him and have him brought to justice. Finally caught at Newington, the man is punished, but then succeeds to escape – again through trickery. Though London provides the stage for the Crank’s performance, it is a highly flexible and temporary performance space that he produces. The Counterfeit Crank appropriates the area under Harman’s lodgings and establishes it as his primary performance space, but he then extends his stage world to the lane and the waterside beyond, which space then evaporates when his identity is suspected – and it is the freedom of movement he enjoys, that which enables him both to produce and then to erase spaces, that seems to be what disturbs Harman and causes him to have the man hunted down through the capital to be eventually imprisoned (i.e. to have his position fixed in relation to place). Though the Crank seems to have the victory here, Harman is able to present himself as one with a detailed knowledge of London’s topography and so, ultimately, able to catch the vagrant. That this tale is flanked on the one side by a story whose characters come from Cornwall, Devonshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex (‘and so [via London] into Kent’) and on the other side by a story whose ‘lewd and most subtle’ characters are ‘Welshmen’, suggests an attempt by Harman to advertise his own knowledge of the relationships of these places to each other and to do so in by appealing to (and possibly constructing) a fear of those for whom boundaries between fixed places are porous – for whom boundaries are there to be transgressed.

Pugliatti notes that ‘one of the peculiar traits of *A Caveat* is that next to “pilfering, picking and spoiling”, dissimulation and disguise are the main imputations which Harman lays on

vagrants'.³⁴ But this is not quite the case, for Harman's emphasis would seem to be his characters' relationships with places (rather than appearances), and the appropriating practices which effect the transformation of these into elusive and transgressive spaces. Pugliatti's focus on dissimulation and disguise tends to ignore the practices which bring these about – the theatricality of Harman's beggars as it reveals itself in their spatial practices. Harman's descriptions (especially of the ways by which his protagonists exploit the formal properties of places for personal advantage) reveals a deep-seated anxiety about those whose relationships to places are unfixed, unstable and opportunistic. It is this element of their theatricality (their capacity for using other people's places to produce immediately advantageous spaces) that locates these rogue characters (and this pamphlet) in a broader set of anxieties about the social production of space in the early modern period. Harman attempts to solve the problem of vagrancy by revealing and publishing the practices of appropriation on which it is based (and through which it operates). Like the anti-vagrancy legislation, *A Caveat* suggests that it was the spatial practices of poverty which were seen to be especially threatening. If Harman's tract 'actually defined mid-Tudor norms of social relations, particularly with the poor and criminal, by its recording of deviance', it did so by revealing that deviance as a matter of spatial production.³⁵ Beier defines deviance in terms of criminality, and notes Harman's contribution to a broader Tudor concern to criminalise those practices of the able-bodied poor that operated outside of the legitimate economies and markets.³⁶ This chapter goes further, however, and argues that Harman's anxiety was not limited to the possible

³⁴ Pugliatti, p.146.

³⁵ Dionne and Mentz, p.111.

³⁶ *ibid.*

implications of those practices for such as himself (and his readership), rather it was more significantly shaped by a perception that the production and use of social space was increasingly vulnerable to the transgressive social and economic practices of the itinerant poor.

The 'Prigger of Prancers' descends on a location not his own to stand around looking as if he lived there.³⁷ Offering to look after the horse of a visiting gentlemen who has just arrived (and who assumes this person to be a local), he then leads the horse away and disappears with it. Although, on the face of it, this looks like a fairly straightforward and simple piece of criminal trickery, its execution is planned, rehearsed, and carried out as a mode of performance – essential to which is the performer's ability to recognise the formal properties of places and to appropriate these for maximum gain. Priggers first have their women survey and describe the territory: 'walking from them in other places, mark where and what they see abroad, and sheweth these Priggers thereof, when they meet'.³⁸ Having identified and chosen his location, the Prigger then inhabits it such that a visitor 'espying the Prigger there standing, [thinks] the same to dwell there'.³⁹ The Prigger's familiarity with the place is, of course, feigned, but it points to a relatively sophisticated level of performance – for he needs to move, stand, sit, loiter, and otherwise use the public spaces of the 'pretty village where diverse houses were' with conviction and artfulness (such that Harman's gentleman will automatically '[think] the same to dwell

³⁷ Kinney, 1990 (pp.124 -25).

³⁸ Kinney, 1990 (p.124).

³⁹ Kinney, 1990 (p.125).

there').⁴⁰ The counterfeit relationship between Prigger and place continues as the gentleman leaves to visit his farmer: the 'Prigger, proud of his prey, walketh his horses up and down, till he saw the Gentleman out of sight', at which point the Prigger's appropriation of the place for performance purposes abruptly ends and his appropriation for more immediately acquisitive purposes begins – and he 'leaps him into the saddle, and away he goeth amain'.⁴¹

The story suggests a highly tactical disposition on the part of the Prigger – whose competences included the ability 'to act' the part convincingly enough that his victim would be thinking "'I had thought he had here dwelled" [as he] marched home mannerly in his boots'.⁴² His use of his woman as a scout (and the degree of preparation this implies), his uses of the public spaces of the village and his quick exit from the scene, mark him out as one able to move quickly from one context and location to another, and to exploit them for the opportunities they allow. Success for the Prigger requires a place for him to come from, a place to travel through, a localised place in which to work, a place through which to escape and a place to which he may return. In terms of their position in the overall structure of the trickery and the practices that constituted it, the localised places where victims were tricked functioned similarly to a stage: for it was there, in the light of the public gaze, that tricks were carried out, costumes worn, lines performed and roles improvised through the vagrant's interactions with the place. This chapter will later consider the construction of the gulling of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* (a piece of trickery in

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

which Maria plays the scout and turns a seemingly stable place into a space of deception, but is never there herself to witness the results), but the theatrical and spatial moves of the Prigger of Prancers are equally discernible in the robbing of the pilgrims by Falstaff and the thieves, and Hal and Poins' robbing of them (*1 Henry 4*), Autolycus's gulling of the Clown (*The Winter's Tale* (IV.3)) and in earlier plays such as Titivillus's entrapment of Mankind (*Mankind*) and at numerous points in *Ralph Roister Doister* (such as when Merrygreek, seeking to make Goodluck and Dame Custance favourably disposed towards Ralph, dismisses Ralph and greets Goodluck as if this was an chance meeting – using the space produced as a means of engineering Ralph's next entrance (5.5)).

The above example from *Mankind* is especially noteworthy: conceived for playing in a range of borrowed spaces (public and private, indoors and outdoors), Titivillus's uses of the performance space articulates a tactical approach to its appropriation that echoes those of the Prigger of Prancers.⁴³ Titivillus, armed with a net, dismisses Nought, Newguise and Nowadays, deliberately in order to encounter Mankind, to delay and 'make him dance to another trace' (525-58).⁴⁴ Alone on stage, Titivillus delights in setting up his trap, '[placing] a board in the earth' (534SD) and declaring his intentions before announcing Mankind's entry and making himself 'invisible to him' (540SD). Mankind, thinking he has found a good spot to plant his grain, 'puts the bag down and prepares to dig' (543SD), but is quickly disabused of his initial judgement of this as a suitable place as 'the spade strikes

⁴³ Pamela, M. King, "Morality Plays" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.240-64 (pp.247-48) & Falco, Ralph, "Medieval and Reformation Roots" in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp.239-56 (p.247).

⁴⁴ "Mankind" in *Three Late Medieval Morality Plays: Mankind, Everyman, Mundus et Infans*, ed. by G. A. Lester (London: A & C Black, 1981), pp.1-57 (p.33).

against the board' (540SD), when he '*looks for the bag [of corn]*' (540SD) he discovers it is missing – searching for it provides Titivillus with the opportunity to steal his spade as well. Titivillus's playful manipulation of the place constantly undermines Mankind's reading of it and his attempts to use it in accordance with the logics implied by that reading. Falling on his knees to pray, Mankind decides 'This place I assign as for my kirk' (552); but, as Mankind prays, Titivillus (still invisible to him) jokes with the audience and '*talks in Mankind's ear*' (560SD) – compelling Mankind to exit to relieve himself (on his way throwing down his rosary, 'My beads be here for whosoever will else' (564)). Like the Prigger of Prancers, success for Titivillus depends on his ability to exploit the formal properties of place; in the light of the public gaze he has tricked Mankind not only out of his seed and spade, but also out of the solace of religion – all of which has been done in highly entertaining ways:

TITIVILLUS

Mankind was busy in his prayer, yet I did him arise.
 He is conveyed – by Christ! – from his divine service.
 Whither is he, trow ye? I wis – I am wonder wise –
 I have sent him forth to shit leasings. (565-68)

It was the vagrant's practices that enabled him successfully to appropriate the public place of the village, to convert it to his purposes and to turn it into a series of spaces (or moments of space) underpinned and moulded by those logics of practice upon which his trickery depended. Theatrically, the entrance of mischievous characters like Titivillus (and Richard of Gloucester) produced an expectation that he would create the spatial context within and through which another character (as yet to enter) would be undermined. The success of the Prigger of Prancers was similarly dependent on entries and exits, access and egress; it is not surprising therefore, that articulated through much of the rogue

pamphlets (and later in the cony-catching pamphlets) is the implication that paths, alleys, roads and streets were seen as potentially vulnerable places, appropriated by vagrants and rogues as sites of connectivity, stealth and escape (a perception shared by Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*).⁴⁵

Like John Awdeley's 1561 *The Fraternity of Vagabonds* (which also claimed that a rogue is all who 'hath no abiding place'), Thomas Harman's *Caveat* needs to be seen as 'part of the mainstream of social and religious discourse in the 1560s' not only for what it says about 'sex, morality and the poor', but also about the relationships (legitimate and illegitimate) between practices and places.⁴⁶ In these pamphlets, to have 'no abiding place' becomes synonymous with being idle, and the beggar 'begins to emerge as the signifier of idleness' – but it is the practices that are popularly associated with idleness which are demonised and criminalised, practices which (like those of the Prigger of Prancers) constitute tactical appropriations of other people's places.⁴⁷ Harman's environment is rural Kent, but the practices he describes and abhors are to be found also in the metropolis – where they become, in the cony-catching pamphlets, not only markers of deviance, but also a source of fascination, even objects of respect. Their staging in the capital's commercial playhouses, and in a range of other borrowed locations, would turn these practices also into popular entertainment and a highly lucrative source of income.

⁴⁵ See chapter 1, p.39.

⁴⁶ Kinney 1990 (p.93). Dionne and Mentz, p.113.

⁴⁷ Pugliatti, p.61.

3.2.3 COZENAGE AS SPATIAL PRACTICE

Published 25 years after Harman's *Caveat*, the pamphlets explored here mark a shift (both in their audiences and in the social provenance of their authors) from pamphlets that deal with the provinces (with their more generalised concerns with the 'idle poor') to pamphlets 'narrating events that had the metropolis as their physical and social background'.⁴⁸ Written largely by professional writers for a growing London readership eager for topical and localised stories reflecting the fluid and unpredictable pace of life in the capital, the cony-catching pamphlets provide detailed descriptions of the (supposed) practices of artful and highly skilled cozeners who exploited the possibilities offered by London's built environment to gull their victims out of their money (and, frequently, their sense of self-esteem and honour).⁴⁹ As with Harman's *Caveat*, my purpose here is not to test the veracity of the incidents and characters described, rather to examine these later pamphlets for what they reveal about the perception and production of social space in the period. The arrival of these pamphlets onto the London cultural scene at the end of a century which saw the metropolis grow (in size and population) exponentially and at an unprecedented rate, marks the cony-catching pamphlets out as particularly significant indices of anxiety.⁵⁰ As equal hostility was shown to vagrants and cozeners as it was to players, I suggest that this says more about contemporary anxieties about the relationships between identity and place, and the ways by which social and cultural space

⁴⁸ Pugliatti, p.126.

⁴⁹ Craig Dionne describes the cony-catching texts as "primers tendering modes of social interaction crucial for the early modern subject's negotiation of London's public spaces" [Dionne, Craig, "Fashioning Outlaws: The Early Modern Rogue and Urban Culture" in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, ed. by Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp.33-61 (p.410)].

⁵⁰ Estimates of London's population growth in the 16th century vary, Sharp suggests a rise from about 50,000 in 1500 to around 200,000 in 1600, [Sharp, J. A., "Economy and Society" in Collinson, Patrick (ed.), *The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.25]. Rappaport is more cautious and suggests a rise to about 120,000 by the death of Queen Elizabeth, [Rappaport, Steve, *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.61].

was produced, than it does about any real threat to public order presented either by cozenage or by playing.⁵¹ Focusing on two of Robert Greene's pamphlets (published in the early 1590s), this section explores the ways by which they represent London through the interactions between its built environment and the tactical and appropriating practices of its cozeners.

Arthur Kinney notes that Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591) reveals an 'authentic commitment to the activity of life', whose rhetorical success relies on a 'quick, sophisticated and educated wit' which is more than a match for the highly skilled and ingenious city-cozeners the author writes about.⁵² As the cony-catchers play games with their victims, so Greene does with his readers – who are tricked into buying what they think is an exposé, only to find themselves 'caught face to face with [their] own potential selfishness and ugliness'.⁵³ Addressing himself 'to the young gentlemen, merchants, apprentices, farmers, and plain countrymen' who, newly arrived in the capital, fear they might find themselves duped by cozeners, Greene begins with a condemnation not of the practices of cozenage but of its affective capacity – its power to beguile and lure its victims into its trap:

Deceit at cards [...] is able to draw (by the subtle shew thereof) a man of great judgement to consent to his own confusion [...] The poor man that cometh to the Term to try his right [...] is drawn by these devilish Cony-catchers [...] The poor

⁵¹ Pugliatti notes how English law in the period (unlike that on the continent) saw and established a close 'connection between beggary and theatre', and that 'the ubiquity and violence of the antitheatrical argument and the emphasis which both the authorities and the pamphlet writers placed on the issue of fraudulent simulation concerning professional begging might be explained by the fact that nowhere else did theatre impregnate social life as pervasively as it did in early modern England', [Pugliatti, p.10].

⁵² Kinney, 1990 (pp.157-58).

⁵³ Kinney, 1990 (p.159).

prentice [...] by these pestilent vipers of the commonwealth is smoothly enticed to the hazard.⁵⁴

Greene's account of the 'Barnard's Law' develops this perception of cozenage as dangerous because it is alluring by articulating the practices through which cozeners insinuated themselves into their victims' acquaintance, then leading them (like 'a sheep to the slaughter') to a tavern where they are skilfully fleeced of their money.⁵⁵ However, the 'pestilent and prejudicial practices' Greene 'sets in print', while on the one hand revealing the dynamics and mechanics of the cozener's art, on the other hand they expose (and affirm) its attractiveness – the principal danger of cozenage is its pleasurable capacity for deflecting its victims from their legitimate activities and drawing them into its trap (a capacity it shares with Greene's pamphlet).

Whatever form it takes, whatever the practices and strategies involved, cozenage is invariably presented as initially attractive to its victims, and a collaborative practice. Acting as a sort of charm, 'the nature of the setter [the cozener who functions to set up the trap and prepare the victim for the verser] is to draw in any person familiarly to drink with him' such that the cony is 'soon induced to play'.⁵⁶ The various practices by which the setter achieves this end all have the common purpose of winning the victim's trust such that he becomes insinuated into the setter's company – 'thus have these filthy fellows their subtle fetches to draw on poor men to fall into their cozening practices [...] like consuming moths

⁵⁴ Greene, Robert, "A Notable Discovery of Cozenage (1591)" in Kinney 1990 (pp.163-64).

⁵⁵ Greene describes the 'Barnard's Law' as a carefully executed and collaborative act of cozenage requiring four men (each with a particular role to play) who, between them, draw the cony into a tavern and a series of wagers which lead to the cony being fleeced of his money – a staged distraction providing the cozeners with their opportunity to escape [Kinney, 1990 (pp.165-66)].

⁵⁶ Kinney, 1990 (pp.166-67).

of the commonwealth'.⁵⁷ The image of a moth drawn helplessly into a flame (and so to its destruction) is highly evocative of the ways by which Greene's cozeners work on their victims. Harman's vagrants are described largely as operating through coercion and importunity (suggesting both a social and a physical distance between the two that is essential to mendicity's success); by contrast, Greene's cozeners operate at a different level – ingratiating themselves into their victim's company, the suggestion is that their practices involve erasing the distance between the two (the personal space of the cony being precisely that which is appropriated by the setter in order for the cozenage to work) – 'thus are prentices induced to be conies'.⁵⁸ The series of contrived encounters between cozeners and conys (though appearing to the cony as accidental) all take place in the public space of the street; described by Greene as 'meetings' they involve the cozeners feigning a friendship with the cony – the flattery is part of the practice, the means whereby a public place is appropriated by the cozeners to effect his transformation from stranger to friend, the cozeners' intrusion into the personal space of the cony is essential to this appropriation. Thus the 'verser', the setter's accomplice who (appraised by the setter of the cony's identity) 'away [he] goes, and crossing the [cony] at some turning, meets him full in the face, and greets him'; the personal space of the cony is the territory the verser denies, his intrusion into it is the means by which he converts it to his uses.⁵⁹ Only afterwards is this experienced by the cony as invasive, as 'being out of doors, poor man, [he] goeth to his lodging with a heavy heart and watery eyes, pensive and

⁵⁷ Kinney, 1990, (p.168).

⁵⁸ Kinney, 1990 (p.172).

⁵⁹ Kinney, 1990 (p.167).

sorrowful'.⁶⁰ In contrast, the cozeners (both setters and versers) repair to taverns or 'bawdy-houses [and] what they get from honest men they spend [...] amongst Harlots, and consume as vainly as they get it villainously'.⁶¹

The apprehension of London as elusive and polymorphous was common in the period (this chapter will go on to note how these apprehensions were turned to comic theatrical advantage by Shakespeare in his various appeals to London's urban environment in *Twelfth Night* and *The Comedy of Errors*), and expresses itself in the spatial ambivalence suggested by the above descriptions – whereby the fixed and stable place of the public street is turned into both a space for the practicing of cozenage and (simultaneously) a space of defilement and ruin. The experience of this singular place of encounter was a matter of perception, however, which helped produce the sense that London was a place of 'many guises and multiple identities'.⁶² It was a perception shaped also by the fact that the capital's numerous topographical areas and divisions were themselves differentiated by 'the selected or coerced habitation of certain places by certain groups, each with a "distinctive demography"' – divisions whose boundaries were precisely what (for the population as a whole) encouraged a notion of stability and security, but which (for the cozeners) provided places to come from, points of entry, places to be practiced, points of exit and places to go to. In short, transgressing boundaries and converting places were the means by which cozeners produced the spaces on which their success depended.⁶³

'London' suggests an homogeneous place with a relatively stable identity, but historians of

⁶⁰ Kinney, 1990 (p.172)

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Dionne and Mentz, p.214.

⁶³ *ibid.*

the period are unanimous in claiming that the experience of the capital by its early modern inhabitants was of a place far more heterogeneous – ‘a proverbial site of dissension, where not even the tolling bells could agree on the hour’.⁶⁴ As the presumed stability of rural localities was seen to be threatened and disrupted by the practices of Harman’s rogues, so the practices of Greene’s cozeners threatened to disrupt a capital whose monolithic presence is remarkably absent from his pamphlets. What the practices of cozenage define are the ways by which spatial practices make use of places (and the divisions and boundaries between them), thereby secreting the capital’s social and economic spaces and problematising the notion of London as a single, homogenous, place with a single and stable identity.

The relationship between space, practices and economic markets is clearly articulated through the cozeners’ uses of places and the boundaries they present. Cozenage was uniquely well placed to recognise, participate in and exploit the potentials of a newly emerging conception of the market ‘increasingly tied to process rather than place’ in which ‘the older boundaries around self and other and, as a consequence, the idea of exchange itself were modified’.⁶⁵ As ‘the capital offered a sizeable concentration of competitive and conspicuous consumers, with portable and accessible material wealth, just waiting to be preyed upon’, it afforded ample opportunity for those artful tacticians who could use their protean qualities for personal economic advantage – whether rogue,

⁶⁴ David Harris Sacks quoted in Dionne and Mentz, p.215. Rappaport pp.1-22, Griffiths, pp.27-66.

⁶⁵ van Elk, Martine, “The Counterfeit Vagrant: The Dynamic of Deviance in the Bridewell Court Records and the Literature of Roguery” in Dionne and Mentz (pp.120-39) p.125.

pamphleteer or player.⁶⁶ What Greene presents (and uses to his advantage) are some of the ways by which London's places were appropriated by cozeners and exploited for their ambiguous status as both discrete, separate(d) areas and, paradoxically, as merely a part of something much larger.

The relationship between cozenage and place is particularly significant. Greene's *Notable Discovery* and his later *The Black Book's Messenger* (1592) both locate instances of cozenage in specific places to such a degree that, in its actual practices, cozenage is invariably represented as site-specific – a set of practices improvised round and moulded to particular times and locations.⁶⁷ If the theatre of Harman's rogues was the barns, highways, woods, village centres and garden gates of rural Kent, that of Greene's cozeners 'was the crowded scene of the metropolis and the venues in which the *haut monde* and the rich gathered at certain times of the day'.⁶⁸ St Paul's was perceived to be fertile ground for cony-catching, the location for numerous acts of reported cozenage (it being a centre for all kinds of trades and services), as was the Exchange and the areas around Strand and Fleet Street. When Falstaff learns that Bardolph has 'gone into Smithfield to buy [him] a horse', Falstaff's response not only plays on a common saying, it also conflates St Paul's (the place) with economic markets, prostitution, vagabonds and the idle poor (St Paul's being where London's masterless men could set up their bills for service and be engaged):

⁶⁶ Dionne and Mentz, p.217.

⁶⁷ Hansen notes that 'as provincial incomes were spent in London, joining rural and city worlds, so [...] rogues were conjugated to urban socioeconomic rhythms' – helping to explain the relationships between specific acts of cozenage and specific places and times of the day/year, [Dionne and Mentz, pp.213-39 (p.217)].

⁶⁸ Pugliatti, p.126.

FALSTAFF

I bought him [Bardolph] at St Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield. And I could get me but a wife in the stews, I were manned, horsed and wived.

(2 *Henry IV*, 1.2.50-4)

For John Awdeley, the trade of the Courtesy Man 'is to walk in such places, where as gentlemen and other worshipful Citizens do resort, as at Pauls, or at Christ's Hospital, and sometimes at the Royal Exchange', while Gilbert Walker's interlocutor R. was cozened 'as I roamed me in the church of Paul's now twenty days ago'.⁶⁹ Robert Greene's narrator, Ned Browne, confesses how:

Walking up and down Paul's, I saw where a Nobleman's brother in England came [...] in at the West door, and how he put up his purse, as having bought something in the Churchyard. I, having an Eagle's eye, spied a good bung [*purse*] containing many shells [*coins*] as I guessed, carelessly put up into his sleeve [...] I looked about me if I could see any of my fellow friends walking there, and straight I found out three or four trusty foists [*pickpockets, cheats*] with whom I talked and conferred about this purse.⁷⁰

Although particular acts of cozenage were practiced in specific locations, enabling cozeners to exploit distinct and potentially lucrative areas of the capital, the qualitative properties of the spaces produced by cozenage were not a consequence of their geographical location, rather of those practices that were performed at particular times, in particular places and on particular people. Whilst specific areas of London provided the stages for the actual performance of cozenage, it was the fluid and dynamic relationships between these places and others (and between city, City, the suburbs and, even, the

⁶⁹ Awdeley, John, "The Fraternity of Vagabonds (1561)" in Kinney, 1990 (p.950. Walker, Gilbert, "A Manifest Detection of Diceplay (1552)" in Kinney, 1990 (p.66).

⁷⁰ Greene, Robert, "The Black Book's Messenger (1592)" in Kinney, 1990 (p.200). Craig Dionne notes that the tendency of the cony-catching literature to present cozeners as having a special and highly useful knowledge of specific places (like St Paul's) enabled the literature to 'be read as a handbook for the urban pedestrian, a rhetorical primer into the ways of miming at St Paul's Church or in the alleys and market stalls, as offering not just clues to defend against the versers and setters, but perhaps a commodified guide to one-up the rogue at his own game' – Dionne, Craig, "Fashioning Outlaws: the Early Modern Rogue and Urban Culture" in Dionne and Mentz (pp.33-61) pp.52-3.

surrounding shires) that enabled them to be appropriated by their users. For cozeners, areas opened into and out of each other, and cozenage produced a spatial ambivalence through its transgression of boundaries that were shown to be highly porous. Cozenage contributed to and exploited London's spatial fluidity, for its uses of particular places were dependent (amongst other things) on easy access and egress. Boundaries were necessary to determine the different areas that, together, would make up the territories within which an act of cozenage could take place; but these boundaries were not barriers, and it was cozeners' ability to recognize and exploit the connectedness of different areas (and the spatial fluidity that produced) that enabled them to use places to their own advantage:

There be inhabiting in and about *London*, certain caterpillars (colliers, I should say) [...] who [...] plant themselves in and about the suburbs of *London* – as *Shoreditch*, *Whitechapel*, *Southwark*, and such places, and there they have a house or yard that hath a back gate [...] and [...] the crafty collier [...] riseth very early in the morning, and either goeth towards *Croyden*, *Whetstone*, *Greenwich*, or *Romford*, and there meeteth with country colliers, who bring coals to serve the market.⁷¹
[italics original]

According to Greene, having bargained there for the coal, the collier then removed it to his house where he transferred it to his own sacks – which held less than the 4 bushels contained in the sacks he bought. The collier then took his sacks of coal into the capital, wandering the streets and selling them as 4 bushel sacks – he then retreated to his house. By the time his victims had discovered they had been cozened, he was safely away. Although this story covers a large area and draws in the shires (and beyond), the spatial practices involved are typical and necessary to cozenage; like the Prigger of Prancers, in making different uses of different places, the collier's success depended on his ability to

⁷¹ Kinney, 1990 (pp.182-83).

play on and transgress the boundaries between them. The cozeners' art is one of penetration, for the good citizens are stopped at, or arrested by, these boundaries – which do not exist, other than as lines of defence for the cozeners. The cozenage takes place in a localised area, the preparation and celebration elsewhere. Thus, though the trick requires the cozeners to recognise and exploit the separateness of different places, for a successful outcome the cozeners' practices deny this separateness, establishing creative connections between places and weaving them into a single moment of cozenage. Similar moments of space are seen to arrive at their conclusion when Ned Browne's associate, having gulled his victim, 'bids them inquire for him at such a sign and place, where he never came, signifying also his name, when in troth he is but a cozening companion, and no such man to be found'.⁷² The space of cozenage evaporates the moment the trick is accomplished and the cony realises what has been done to him – at which point, like a theatrical space after the performance has ended, it is replaced by something more isolated, a space emptied of its players, its fun and (for the victim) his money.

3.2.4 CONCLUSION

Harman and Greene both use their vantage points as writers to highlight (and demonise) the spatial practices of rogues and cozeners, but it is against the fixity of their positions that these spatial practices are seen to be transgressive. Both rogue and cozeners are othered through the representation of their spatial practices as deviant by authors who use the stability of their own locatedness (and of print) to suggest a norm against which the practices of rogues and cozeners stand out as abnormal. Harman's position as

⁷² Kinney, p.203.

commentator authorises his perception of roguery as a form of spatial deviancy, a perception emanating from his house in rural Kent. Similarly, Greene writes from, for and of London – which is both the context for most of the cozenage he describes and the audience to whom he is appealing (and whose fears and anxieties he is drawing on and helping to sustain). As this chapter goes on to demonstrate, this creative exploitation of Londoners' fears and anxieties becomes a feature of Shakespeare's plays conceived primarily for performance in the capital – wherein London is appealed to as a place of uncertainty and potential danger. The authorial positions of both Harman and Greene produce territories positing borders and boundaries; but it is the denial of borders and boundaries (their penetration and usurpation) by rogues and cozeners that enables these tricksters to treat both rural Kent and urban London as porous sites – thereby demonstrating the highly ambiguous and contingent nature of boundaries whose power Harman and Greene acknowledge and thereby reinforce. As this chapter also goes on to show, the porous nature of presumed boundaries was precisely that which early modern playhouse production exploited – the thresholds between the stage and the auditorium (even between different parts of the stage) and between the playhouse and world beyond its walls constituting precisely those boundaries that players recognised and transgressed for theatrical effect.

Rogues and cozeners operate according to logics that identify and prepare a place for an act of robbery to take place in, a place from which to enter, a place through which to exit and another in which to end up. The deception and dissimulation was dependent on and practiced through spatial appropriations that operated according to their own logics of

practice: 'See, Gentlemen, what great Logicians these Cony-catchers be, that have such rhetorical persuasions to induce the poor countryman to his confusions'.⁷³ Greene's appeal to 'rhetorical persuasions' should not be taken as an appeal to the power of language over and above the potency of practices. Rhetoric was always a use of language, and the context for Greene's deployment of the term is that of cozeners seeking, through a range of artful practices, to persuade a cony out of his money. Just as the effect of rhetoric was always negotiated (its meanings being many and diverse, as the audience for a piece of work 'could and would look for multiple meanings (being urged and expected to do so')), so the effect of any single act of cozenage was the product of the particular and localised negotiations between cony-catcher, cony and place: 'meaning [was] a matter of practice and [...] language [was] a matter of cause and effect'.⁷⁴

The vagrant's skill lay in their tactical uses of places and the boundaries that defined them, re-inscribing them into their own spatial geographies. Rogues and cozeners appropriated places through logics of practice that were tactical in nature, always an attempt to 'make do' with what society presented them with – and in ways other than those intended by their producers.⁷⁵ As well as blurring the distinction between places, the uses to which these 'logicians' put their chosen places also blurred the distinction between work and leisure. Especially noticeable in the work and practices of the cozener (for whom success almost always culminated in a visit to a tavern or a bawdy-house – such as the 'Barnard

⁷³ Kinney, p.168.

⁷⁴ Reiss, Timothy, *Knowledge, Discovery and Imagination in Early Modern Europe: the Rise of Aesthetic Rationalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp.74-5.

⁷⁵ 'Making do' is another term for that tactical mode of operating whereby individuals convert strategic operations and systems of power and control to their own advantage, [de Certeau, pp.29-30].

[who] steals away with all the coin and gets him to one blind Tavern or other where these Cozeners had appointed to meet' or those cony-catchers who, having robbed a 'Welchman [...] stepped into some blind Alehouse to divide the shares'), the conflation between the two cultural activities of work and leisure produced a mutually reinforcing pattern in which the fun to be gained from the trickery was as significant as its successful execution.⁷⁶ The relationships between robbery, fun, success and the tavern are especially significant factors in *1 Henry IV*, where a tavern is both the thieves' intended meeting place prior to the Gadshill robbery (1.2.) and the place where its various outcomes and implications are reflected on and celebrated (2.4). This chapter goes on to note how another of Shakespeare's plays, *Twelfth Night*, appeals to London's built environment to produce a spatiality that draws on its audiences' experiences and perceptions of specific places. Antonio's decision to lodge himself 'in the south suburbs, at the Elephant' (3.3.39), while Sebastian goes to 'see the relics of this town' (3.3.1), happens at the point in the play where the two men (strangers in Illyria) feel most divided about the dangers of the town – which Antonio fears as 'rough and unhospitable' (3.3.10-1). His decision, therefore, to hide himself 'in the south suburbs, at the Elephant' produces a comic interplay between the play and the world of which it was part (especially when it was being performed in the suburbs) – the Elephant Inn being 'an inn-cum-brothel' on Bankside.⁷⁷ Antonio's decision to take shelter at the Elephant takes him to a tavern: a place of both employment and of recreation, and where licentiousness was bound up with fun and criminality – in other words, with the potential to surround him with the very characters he is fearful of encountering on the streets (a conflation of place and practices echoed in Falstaff's

⁷⁶ Kinney, pp.166 & 173.

⁷⁷ Elam, Keir, ed., *Twelfth Night: or What You Will*, Arden 3rd Series (London: Cengage, 2008) p.272.

complaint to the Prince in *1 Henry IV* that 'The other night I fell asleep here, behind the arras, and had my pocket picked: this house is turned bawdy-house, they pick pockets' (3.3.97-9)). Kinney notes that cozeners not only used great skill and cunning, but that the literature suggests that the set-up, the sport, was often presented as being more rewarding, more important and fun than the successful 'kill' (a perspective reinforced through the writers' use of a cant that constantly defines victims as 'gulls' and 'conys' and which presents cozenage as a form of sport – and which Harman and Greene both reinscribe as entertainment).⁷⁸ Shakespeare's housing of Antonio 'in the suburbs, at the Elephant' sets Antonio up (in the minds of his audiences) with the potential to be gulled, and is part of the way whereby the playwright sought to turn this into a moment of fun.

The practices of rogues and cozeners depend on circumstances and deliberately contravene the logics of place. Tactical in nature, cozenage denotes a mode of action that intervenes in the arena of public space in order to turn it to the cozeners' advantage. Clearly lacking neither rules nor logic, cozenage intervenes in and exploits the logics of place and uses its own logics of practice to 'constitute something like a second level interwoven into the first'.⁷⁹ For the reader of Harman and Greene's pamphlets, much of the pleasure is derived from being a voyeur on the creative collisions between these two operations of place: first, that of the victim, who goes along with and is moulded by the place in which he finds himself (whose practices conform to the rules of place) and, second, of the cozeners who deliberately intervenes in that place, introducing into it a series of tactical moves that, unbeknown to the victim, produces a very different space to

⁷⁸ Kinney, p.36.

⁷⁹ de Certeau, p.30.

the one in which the victim thinks he is. It is this artfulness that seems to have attracted writers such as Harman and Greene – for, though they vary in the degree to which they condemn their subjects, both writers are detailed and thorough enough in their descriptions to indicate if not a respect for cozenage at least an acknowledgement of its underlying logic. Both writers describe the ways by which some of the early modern poor intervened in an increasingly dominant and dominating spatiality shaped and determined by the operations of strategic power. As spatial practice seeking to make use of that strategic/dominating space, cozeners sought to overlay the physical space of urban London with their own significances – appropriating and changing it through imaginative modes of operation and productive logics of practice:

Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its laws for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation.⁸⁰

3.3 TRICKERY AND THE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF COMMON PLAYING

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's plays offer a range of 'popular characters which in some cases may seem to be derived from the rogue pamphlets', but they also present a wide range of plots based on and developed through theatrical practices of deception and dissimulation that bear a marked similarity to those described by the rogue and cony-catching pamphlets.⁸¹ The scenes studied in this section rely for their effectiveness on characters altering their identities by taking on disguises and adopting practices in order to deceive those they encounter. Though the role of physical appearance is fundamental to these transformations, what I want to note here are the ways by which shifts in identity are

⁸⁰ de Certeau, p.30.

⁸¹ Pugliatti, p.149.

effected through spatial production – in other words, dependent on deviant modes of practice in relation to place which produce their own spatialities. Like the rogue and con-catching literature, early modern theatre was fascinated not simply with mistaken physical appearances, but also with the mechanics of the practices that brought about misrecognitions, unlooked for confrontations, unexpected but entertaining encounters. Playhouses had a pivotal role in the development of this fascination; their geographical fixity and the fixity of their internal organisations produced the equally fixed and stable places within and against which the practices of characters could be highlighted so as to forefront their compliance with or deviance from those norms established by the rules of place. By building its own permanent places of performance, early modern theatre was able to exploit the formal properties of place to stage the practices that produced the most fruitful encounters between the two. Players worked through stage logics that appropriated the place of performance to produce the experiential space of theatrical performance, in so doing they not only deployed many of the same practices used by rogues and cozeners, they also fore-fronted them to turn the practices of deception and economic gain into objects of pleasure and entertainment. Theatrical performance did not simply stage cozenage, it produced its own.

3.3.2 STAGING THE PRACTICES OF COZENAGE

3.3.2.1 Harman's Dummerer & Shakespeare's Simpcox (2 Henry VI)

Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI* dates from the early 1590s, and is one of his earliest plays written both for the playhouse and for touring.⁸² Significant for the presence it gives to

⁸² Hampton-Reeves, Stuart and Rutter, Carol, *The Henry VI Plays* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2006) pp.15-8. Knowles, Ronald (ed.), *King Henry VI Part 2*, Arden 3rd Series (London: Thomson, 1999) pp.106-21.

‘ordinary people in history and their ability to mobilise themselves in sufficient numbers [...] to disrupt the conventional notion of history as the story of kings and nobles’, its extensive cast of ‘ordinary’ characters (including an armourer, apprentices, petitioners and neighbours, a witch and a conjuror, a rogue and his wife, townsmen, servants and commoners, murderers, rebels, a butcher, weaver and citizens) depicts them as actively involved in petitioning, trespassing onto enclosed land, and climbing a wall to gain access to a garden; in short, transgressing those boundaries by which places were produced and defined.⁸³ With the royal court at St Albans, 2.1 begins in the middle of a hunt, the court enters (*with falconers hallooing*) and a dispute grows between Suffolk, the Cardinal and Gloucester. When this culminates in Gloucester and the Cardinal secretly arranging to meet later for a duel, the townspeople of St Albans arrive carrying Simpcox in a chair – who claims to have just been miraculously healed of his blindness. Although the practices of cozenage are most evident here in relation to the deception by Simpcox and his wife, what I want to note is the ways by which the language of cony-catching and roguery pervades the entire scene – such that, though the practices of cozenage are most intimately bound up in the work of Simpcox, as a potent social, cultural and economic force, cozenage is invoked more widely to help give shape (and pleasure) to another spatially produced form of deception: theatrical production.

The cony-catching pamphlets suggest that, for its practitioners, the pleasure of cozenage was derived as much from its planning and execution as from its material success. Some of

⁸³ Hampton-Reeves and Rutter note the first appearance of the commoners ‘as petitioners, creeping through a gap in the fences of enclosed lands, almost as if stealing themselves into the pages of history’, [Hampton-Reeves and Rutter, 21].

the relationships between cozenage and hunting and sport have already been noted; in this scene from *2 Henry VI* aspects popularly associated with cozenage are carefully woven into a dramatic texture which begins with sport and hunting and ends with the unmasking of Simpcox as a fraud and a declaration (by Gloucester) of his punishment – Simpcox's practices are revealed as deception through a medium (professional theatre) capitalising (*sic*) on its own capacity for deriving material profit from the pleasure of its own staged deceptions. The entrances of the King, Queen, Gloucester, Cardinal and Suffolk at the start of the scene are accompanied by *Falconers hallooing*; the Queen's opening lines 'Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook / I saw not better sport these seven years' day' (2.1.1-2) initiates a dialogue whereby the enactment and language of sport and hunting illustrate the nature of the onstage power struggles and politicking. The scene's opening moves suggest a spatiality in which the stage (balanced by the five main characters) is animated by an unspecified number of 'falconers hallooing' – their stage activity requiring them to 'direct hounds' and to call in a manner to 'get attention'.⁸⁴ In the midst of this activity, the principal characters' descriptions of hunting increasingly mirror and characterise their own relationships and perceptions of each other – Gloucester's ambition (like his falcon) 'with what a pitch she flew above the rest', Suffolk's 'hawks do tower so well, / They know their master loves to be aloft', and the Cardinal is seen as such an obstacle to political ambition that Gloucester asks 'Were it not good your grace could fly to heaven?' (2.1.6, 10-11, 17). Though the scene begins by establishing associations of sport, hunting and pleasure, the emphasis quickly turns to the kill (i.e. the reward, the material gain to be had – whether waterfowl, political power or position). As conversation turns increasingly from the

⁸⁴ Knowles, p.195 (fn.2.1.0). Dessen, Alan C. and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama: 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.108.

dominant stage activity (hunting) to the political power struggles between the characters, the action of the stage (the contexts it has, through mimetic representation, produced for itself) is seen to contrast with, but also illustrate, other factors at work in the fiction. Though the king attempts to 'compound this strife' (2.1.57), this is not before the Cardinal blames Gloucester for their loss of sport (2.1.45) and Gloucester assures the king that they were 'talking of hawking, nothing else, my lord' (2.1.48). The opening 57 lines of this scene do more than merely provide a sense of location and context for the arrival of the townspeople of St Albans and the presentation of Simpcox. What has been thus far presented through the stage action has been hunting, but communicated more potently has been the power struggles of individuals – the tensions and stresses of relationships in which individual identity is a constant negotiation between hunter and hunted (a similar process of negotiation as that found between cony-catcher and cony, cozener and gull). It is not so much that the stage action has been deceptive, rather that the action has been used primarily to articulate something other (and in addition) to that which is described – the hallooing falconers and the language of hawking and sport provide one context for this scene, but the space is more significantly produced by the relative fixity of five characters (who do all the talking) around whom those same falconers 'do' their hallooing. The stage has remained a fixed place throughout, it has been the actors' uses of that place that has enabled them to produce the qualitative space of performance experienced by its audience as one of sport and pleasure – in which the vulnerability of identity to the power struggles and ambitions of the court has been playfully exposed and illustrated.

A common feature of Harman's narratives is their establishing of a relatively stable context for an act of roguery that is then presented as an intervention in an otherwise ordered and stable world. Harman's story of the dummerer (one who feigns dumbness) begins with his 'having on a time occasion to ride to Dartford to speak with a priest there, who maketh all kinds of conserves very well [...] and repairing to his house, I found a Dummerer at his door and the priest himself perusing of his licence'.⁸⁵ Then begins the tale of how the dummerer's arrival deflected Harman from his original purpose and set him off on a trail back home, and so, ultimately, to the dummerer's arrest and punishment. Part of Harman's effect is achieved by the initial (stable) context he creates for his story, and which enables his presentation of the dummerer as someone who intervenes in this world and destabilises it. Similar work is done, dramatically, by Shakespeare's establishing of one space only then to intervene in it, allowing for a different one to develop. One of the theatrical functions of the opening of 2.1 is to produce both a context and a space which can then be deflected for an exploration of the false miracle that follows – this deflection, and the shift in nature and purpose it suggests, is a fundamental way by which, in performance, the play works to engage and entertain its audience. Starting with the context of the king's contentious court hunting at St Albans, Shakespeare interrupts this, enabling a transformation of the performance space: like the spatial transitions between scenes (the hand over from one scene to another), such moments as the arrival of the townspeople of St Albans provide the means whereby performance space evolves and mutates. It is a townsman (not the king) who ultimately 'compounds [the] strife' of the nobles, and not by bringing about any sort of restitution

⁸⁵ Kinney, 1990 (p.132).

but by interrupting the action and deflecting it. His abrupt entry steals the focus (*Enter Townsman crying 'A miracle!'* (2.1.56)) and initiates a spatial shift in the scene, preparing the stage for the entry (10 lines later) of the large crowd comprising '*the Mayor of Saint Albans' and his brethren, with music* [and Simpcox's] *Wife and Townspeople following'* and redirecting focus onto *the man* [Simpcox, being carried] *between two in a chair'* (2.1.66). By the time the king addresses the seated Simpcox directly (2.1.73-5), Simpcox has claimed a focus whose quality and intensity contrasts markedly with what preceded it. A scene which began with a more diffused focus (distributed between the court, but increasingly centred on Gloucester and the Cardinal), which had the falconers looking down (their hallooing an attempt to get the hounds to chase wildfowl from cover) and the nobles looking up (at the birds) and across at each other (as they jostled for authority), is then (through the initial intervention of a single townsman) transformed into a space whose single point of focus is a lame, seated commoner. Miraculously healed of his blindness (with the potential to playfully examine and respond to the world around him), Simpcox is now the object of attention, the rest of the cast looking down on him as he looks up (and out) at them. From the audience's perspective the space has changed profoundly; the arrival of Simpcox has effected a deeply pleasurable transformation – experienced by the spectators as the product of the players' creativities in relation to their movements, distributions, manipulations of focus and quality of balance.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Alan Dessen notes some important functions for the chair at this point: the identification of it specifically as a sick-chair enables the Simpcox scene to act as a complementary perspective on the wider themes of kingly power explored by the play. Especially when viewed in the context of the tetralogy, and the relationships they stage (and problematise) between the seated king and the throne (the symbolic source of his power and authority), the Simpcox scene helps produce an 'initial confusion of throne-chair and sick-chair [that] calls attention to an important set of associations that links disease to kings and power-brokers [...] Simpcox in his chair therefore prepares us for a hapless Henry on his throne who is unable to protect Humphrey or Lord Say [...] this king is therefore vulnerable to an obvious fraud (Cade)' – Dessen, Alan C,

Simpcox's wife has an instrumental role in helping to establish him both as the centre of focus and as a cozenor (and so one who practices deceit for material gain). Like the 'Morts and Doxies' of Harman's upright man, or the woman who works alongside and for the Prigger of prancers, or 'these common trulls [who] walk abroad [...] as stales to draw men into hell', Simpcox's wife works in partnership with her husband as a collaborator – her presentation appealing to a popular perception of rogue women encouraged by the rogue and cony-catching literature, a perception comically reinforced by her theatrical role in this scene as she works with her husband by qualifying his responses to the questions put to him.⁸⁷ When Simpcox is revealed as a cheat and has been chased off stage, it is his wife who (left behind) seeks to justify their deception with 'Alas, sir, we did it for pure need' (2.1.149). Their presentation as a partnership draws on and sustains a popular perception of rogues as being particularly dangerous because of their supposed tendency to work collaboratively together. However, Shakespeare both draws on and undermines this perception; Simpcox's comic humiliation (watched also by his wife) underscores their presentation as humorous incompetents, but it also makes an obvious connection with a wider body of popular fiction in which rogues and cony-catchers are presented as entertaining characters whose practices, if not admirable, at least hold a significant attraction for those who fear they might be gulled by them. One section of the onstage audience Simpcox has attracted (the townspeople of St Albans) runs off with him still crying 'A miracle!' (2.1.145), another section of the onstage audience (the court) look on as his wife (the third part of Simpcox's onstage audience) attempts to justify their trickery

"Stagecraft and Imagery in Shakespeare's Henry VI" in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol.23, Early Shakespeare Special Number (1993) 65-79 (pp.77-8).

⁸⁷ Kinney, p.117, 124 & 178.

– meanwhile, the theatre audience look on, from outside, attracted not only by Simpcox's deceitfulness and the diverse range of stage responses to it, but also by the theatrical trickery through which it has been presented and into which they have been contracted.

Of course, the staging suggested here is necessarily speculative. However, it is not meant as a definitive explanation of the scene; rather, as an indication of how its production of space might have been achieved through the deployment of balance and focus, the description is entirely consistent with what is implied by the text – and offers a plausible explanation of how the scene might have worked in its original contexts (where 3-dimensional staging required the actors to use 'diagonal blocking [and] the depth as well as the length of the stage', and to do so to engage its audiences as collaborators in the activity of production).⁸⁸ Much has been made of Shakespeare's collaborative mode of production, a mode which productions at Shakespeare's Globe in London have attempted variously to rediscover – as actors and directors have tried to make theatrical sense of a building that, on the one hand offers great intimacy, on the other hand leaves the actor very exposed.⁸⁹ Approaching this scene for how its space is produced and how it then evolves necessarily reveals its various audiences as participants in its construction – as it reveals collaboration as a spatial phenomenon.

⁸⁸ Kiernan, Pauline, *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe* (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) p.63.

⁸⁹ The qualitative and performance implications of collaborative practices are explored in chapter 4. See also Carson, Christie and Farah Karim-Cooper, (eds.), *Shakespeare's Globe: a Theatrical Experiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.197-210; Kiernan, 1999 (pp.129-57); Gurr, Andrew and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.8-11.

Modern productions of the Simpcox scene have sought to exploit the potentials of the various modes of stage/audience engagement allowed for by the playtext for a range of artistic and political purposes. Keen to clarify the narrative by 'reducing the number of protagonists the audience is asked to follow', Adrian Noble's decision to cut the scene from his 1988 production *The Plantagenets* at the RSC was in line with an aesthetic aimed at 'simplify[-ing] the actuality of politics' by highlighting the role of the individual rather than exploring a collaborative (and therefore politicised) relationship with its audiences.⁹⁰ Heavily influenced by Jan Kott's *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, Noble's production was concerned more with the 'grand mechanism' of history and 'the grotesque absurdity of existence' than implicating its audience in the construction of that history and encouraging a sense of responsibility for it.⁹¹ By contrast Bogdanov's 1987 history-cycle *The Wars of the Roses* aimed at the opposite, looking for opportunities 'to perform challenging theatre for audiences outside London', Bogdanov sought to engage those audiences 'through activating contemporary associations rather than pandering to the hollow authenticity of the past'.⁹² Staging the scene so that the audience was drawn into the court's laughter at Simpcox, Bogdanov then isolated the offstage audience from the onstage audience through Margaret's laughter at Simpcox's wife's excuse to Gloucester that 'we did it for pure need' – a line which disturbed Gloucester and made the offstage audience uncomfortable at having just laughed with Margaret at these characters (an awkwardness that increased when Margaret continued to laugh as Simpcox was

⁹⁰ Quoted in Knowles, p.29. The relationships between collaborative modes of production and performance and modern ensemble approaches are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

⁹¹ Hampton-Reeves and Rutter, pp.162-63. It was in response to such approaches that Wekwerth said that 'Shakespeare is our contemporary only if we first politicise him', [Wekwerth, Manfred, *Brecht Symposium 2000: Brecht/Acting/Directing*, August 2000, Rose Bruford College].

⁹² Hampton-Reeves and Rutter, pp.135-36.

whipped).⁹³ The offstage audience's discomfort was further nuanced by the production's aligning of Old Queen Margaret with a more contemporary (post-Falkland's War) Margaret Thatcher – an alignment calculated both to highlight the latter's role as a contemporary war-mongering leader unable to learn from the past, and to insinuate something similar for the audience.⁹⁴

The association of Simpcox and his wife with the popular perception of rogues articulated by the rogue and cony-catching literature is developed through Simpcox's account of how he came to St Albans from 'Berwick in the north' (2.1.80). Like the fictitious stories concocted by other rogues and cony-catchers as part of their performances, it is a highly attractive story, engaging and compelling: 'being called a hundred times and oft'ner, in my sleep, by good Saint Alban, who said, "Simon, come, come offer at my shrine and I will help thee"' (2.1.86-9). Simpcox gulls the imagination of his audience, but his fanciful (and suspicious) account also instigates the series of questions that then lead to his discovery – in precisely the same way is the dummerer uncovered by Harman, whose suspicion is aroused by the dummerer's licence which 'I [...] noting the seals, found one of the seals like unto a seal that I had about me, which seal I bought besides Charing Cross [...] And having understanding before of their peevish practices, made me to conceive that all was forged and naught'.⁹⁵ With Shakespeare, however, the dialogue is measured, presented so as both to maximise its value as entertainment and to exploit the qualities of the broken

⁹³ Knowles, p.31. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter note a similar approach taken by the 1981 BBC/Timelife production, directed by Jane Howell – Hampton-Reeves and Rutter p.127.

⁹⁴ Potter, Lois, "Recycling the Early Histories: 'The Wars of the Roses' and 'The Plantagenets'" in *Shakespeare Survey* 43 (1991) 171-81 (pp.174 & 179).

⁹⁵ Kinney, 1990 (p.132).

pentameter line (whereby characters work to initiate and complete – and twist – the sense or direction of the line):

CARDINAL
 What, art thou lame?
 SIMPCOX
 Ay, God Almighty help me!
 SUFFOLK
 How cam'st thou so?
 SIMPCOX
 A fall of a tree.
 GLOUCESTER
 How long hast thou been blind?
 SIMPCOX
 O, born so, master.
 GLOUCESTER
 What, and wouldst climb a tree?
 SIMPCOX
 But that in all my life, when I was a youth. (2.1.92-96)

The nature of Simpcox's inquisition is interesting for another feature it shares with the method of Harman's discovery of the dummerer – both of which are presented as forms of deductive reasoning betraying an underlying logic equal, if not superior, to those of the rogues they are dealing with. Harman engages the assistance of 'a Surgeon and cunning in his science' who claims to have had previous success in revealing the dissembling nature of dummerers. The two of them then embark on a physical examination of the dummerer – Harman encouraging the surgeon to 'put his finger in [the dummerer's] mouth, and to pull out his tongue'.⁹⁶ However, as the man still 'would neither speak nor yet could hear', Harman suggests tying his fingers together and rubbing a stick through them until he spoke – a suggestion rejected by the surgeon in favour of them hanging the dummerer from a beam by his wrists, 'at length for very pain, he required for God's sake to let him

⁹⁶ Kinney, 1990 (p.133).

down. So he that was both deaf and dumb could in short time both hear and speak'.⁹⁷ A process which began with Harman treating the dummerer with suspicion develops through a more active investigation, questioning, and (ultimately) the denial of his personal space through the application of physical torture. Success for Harman was celebrated by his taking 'that money I could find in his purse and distributed the same to the poor people dwelling there', but it also culminated in controlling the dummerer's relation to place by sending him 'to the next Justicer, where they preached on the Pillory for want of a Pulpit' and where he was 'well whipped' – flagellation as a form of social control in the service of spatial production.⁹⁸

A similar process is discernible in the questioning of Simpcox by the court, who begin by acknowledging and producing a distance between themselves and Simpcox ('Stand by, my masters, bring him near the King' (2.1.71)) but whose practices become increasingly invasive of the space Simpcox's arrival has produced – gradually erasing that distance as their suspicions increase. The initial physical distance between the court and Simpcox coincides with the story of Simpcox's journey from 'Berwick in the north' to St Albans – a journey which prompts the King's congratulations that 'God's goodness hath been great to thee' (2.1.81). The distance between the two is further nuanced by the fact that Simpcox remains seated while all the others (including, in all probability, the king) stand, and by Simpcox's function as an isolated but significant and heightened point of focus – there being at least seventeen characters on stage for whom Simpcox is their point of focus. As Alan Dessen notes, Shakespeare's uses of the sick-chair anticipate the royal throne and its

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

significances in *Part 3* – indeed, York’s accusations against Henry and Henry’s own weakness in *Part 3* ‘are enhanced by a subliminal memory of the purportedly lame Simpcox exposed as a fraud and forced to ‘give place’ from *his* chair (and leap over the stool) by the beadle’.⁹⁹ However the scene was staged, Simpcox being carried ‘*between two in a chair*’ was a hugely significant moment in the play and the cycle of which it was part: ‘bringing a figure onstage in a chair was the primary way of signalling ‘*enter sick*’ or ‘*as if sick*’.¹⁰⁰ Given that the only other type of chair to appear in the cycle is the throne, Simpcox’s appearance, and the gathering around him of the King, court and commons had the potential to parody similar gatherings around the similarly seated Henry.

Gloucester’s suspicions here, however, prompt him to ask Simpcox to let him see his eyes, then ‘wink now – now open them’ (2.1.102), implying that Gloucester has already encroached into Simpcox’s personal space. The shared focus between Simpcox and Gloucester is then broadened out as Gloucester asks Simpcox to look at ‘this cloak’ then ‘my gown’ and, in each case, to specify their colour (2.1.105 & 107) – actions which, whatever their function in terms of the narrative of the play, serve to expand the focus and, by locating Simpcox in more interrelated ways to other characters and objects on stage, producing a highly textured space. Gloucester’s testing of Simpcox results not only in Simpcox’s exposure as a fraud but also to his lameness (his immobility) being enforced by Gloucester – who commands ‘then, Simon, sit there the lying’st knave in Christendom’ (2.1.121-22). If the distance between Simpcox and the rest of the characters at the opening of this section was the product of Simpcox’s status as a novelty (to be set apart

⁹⁹ Dessen, pp.78-9.

¹⁰⁰ Dessen, p.76. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter, pp.15-7.

and to be viewed), the distance is now a means of control – as Gloucester organises the space to produce a site in which Simpcox's exposure as a sham will be performed as entertainment, a source of pleasure (for the onstage audience as well as for the offstage one).

Just as Harman's dummerer was ultimately humiliated and physically abused in order to enforce his confession and satisfy a desire for punishment, so Gloucester sets about orchestrating things so that Simpcox's fraudulence can be seen as such and experienced as entertainment. Calling for the beadle and then a stool, then setting the stool before Simpcox, Gloucester sets up his own trick which forces Simpcox to use the place constructed for him according to the rules dictated by Gloucester. Gloucester calls on Simpcox to 'leap over that same stool', but Simpcox complains that 'I am not able to stand' – whereupon '*After the Beadle hath hit him once, he leaps over the stool and runs away*' (2.1.142 & 145). Gloucester turns the trick on Simpcox, by exploiting the properties of the place and turning them to his (and the audience's) advantage, Gloucester parodies precisely what Simpcox has done in using the place of St Albans to his advantage. The call to have Simpcox (and his wife) 'whipped through every market town till they come to Berwick, from whence they came' (2.1.150-51) does more than invoke the terms of the anti-vagrancy legislation, like Harman's dummerer, the Simpcoxes lose their autonomy in relation to place and are themselves to be (re-)located and confined by those in authority. Simpcox' loss (like Harman's dummerer's) is his capacity for tactically producing his own spaces; confined to and defined by the spaces of others, his disposition to act in ways that appropriate space is curtailed, and Gloucester's charge is that Simpcox be absorbed into a

dominant spatiality that seeks to make its users subject to its political purposes. The final act inflicted on Harman's drummer was to be arrested, placed in the pillory and then whipped, which potentially comic presentation bears some similarity with the equally spatially-invasive whipping of Simpcox. Ultimately, what both scenes scrutinise are those collisions which arise when places, strategically defined and constructed through the operations of power, are appropriated by those for whom they were designed (whose tactical interventions subvert the rules of those places and exploit them for personal advantage).¹⁰¹

The exit of Simpcox, his wife and the townspeople of St Albans is not the end of the scene, however, and something approaching the quality of space that prevailed prior to the arrival of Simpcox is then asserted by the court who (on a stage now devoid of the falconers' hallooing) reclaim the focus and, evoking briefly the language of the hunt that preceded this section, provoke also an awareness of its absence (and an awareness of the means by which Simpcox is also being hunted down). What replaces it is a balanced stage whose reclaimed stability is then punctuated by the arrival of Buckingham with news of Lady Eleanor's arrest. Though the scene eventually ends by pointing to the future (with Gloucester banishing his wife from 'my bed and company', and the King announcing their departure for London the next day (2.1.188 & 191-96)), it also looks backwards to the staged deceptions of 1.4 (where Eleanor had a witch, a conjuror and two priests raise a spirit). These final moments of 2.1 serve numerous purposes: in bridging the transition from the energy and humour of the hunt and Simpcox sections to the next scene in the

¹⁰¹ de Certeau, pp.29-30.

Duke of York's garden, they mediate between two spaces – but this is achieved by players and through practices which reassert the authority of the place of the stage and its capacity to define the terms by which that place works, its rules. Though the audience experiences the whole scene as an unfolding series of events that overlap, merging into and out of each other, this is a perception grounded in the spatial shifts of performance.

3.3.2.2 Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*

The practices of cozenage inform and give shape to a substantial element of the action of *Twelfth Night*. Conceived and performed nearly 10 years later than *2 Henry VI*, *Twelfth Night* articulates a more complex and developed set of interactions between the practices of theatre and those of cozenage, and reflects a growing confidence in the capacity of professional theatre to produce and sustain its own form of trickery (one that continued to feed on contemporary anxieties about transgressive uses of places). Hurworth claims that 'In Shakespeare's plays, gulling rarely occupies centre-stage [...] although it frequently surfaces as an incident in the main plot'; I would disagree with this, and argue that such a view is the product of a (literary) tendency to see the plays in terms of main plots and subplots – which view distorts the nature of the playtexts as (amongst other things) indicators of and cues for performance.¹⁰² For an audience, distinctions between main plots and subplots are often blurred (or even non-existent); the integration and blending together of different plot elements into a poetic unity experienced as such being precisely that which gives a scene its cohesiveness and balance.¹⁰³ The practices of cozenage are constantly

¹⁰² Hurworth, Angela, "Gulls, Cony-Catchers & Cozeners: *Twelfth Night* and the Elizabethan Underworld" in *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999) 120-32 (p.120).

¹⁰³ Despite attempting to account for the singularity of the audience's experience of the play, Ralph Berry roots his analysis in a binary division between a 'romantic main action' and 'comic relief', describing how

being evoked and invoked in *Twelfth Night*, such that to focus merely on the various staged gullings (and their contributions to the development of any one particular plot-line) is to ignore the ways by which the practices of deception associated with cozenage are being more widely appealed to (and reproduced) through performance. This section explores a number of scenes in relation to the staged gulling of Malvolio for what they reveal about Shakespeare's deployment of the fixed place of the stage to produce a pleasurable space of transgression, in which the rules of place are playfully exploited to expose the vulnerability of those who would be expected to operate and be defined by them.

Just as hawking, scheming and politicking are all appealed to as sports and are variously incorporated into the sport of theatrical production in *2 Henry VI* 2.1, so the gulling of Malvolio begins not only with Sir Toby and Fabian testifying to its attractiveness as sport ('If I lose a scruple of this sport let me be boiled to death with melancholy' (2.5.2-3)), but also conflating the sport of gulling with other popular entertainments and economic practices such as prostitution and bear-baiting (2.5.5-9).¹⁰⁴ The deception being practiced on Malvolio is described as 'jesting' (2.5.18), whose ultimate purpose is not financial or other material advantage, rather the pleasure of Malvolio's humiliation: 'Wouldst thou

'the minor action bids to overwhelm the major' in the final section of the play, [Berry, pp.111 & 118]. Weimann, describing the comic interplay at work in the play, argues that it is its very complexity that prevents us from seeing the play in terms of main plots and sub-plots – for the different plot elements offer different perspectives on each other, illuminating each other 'to define the play's comic vision as expressing a complex poetic impression of life', [Weimann, Robert, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. by Robert Schwartz (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p.175].

¹⁰⁴ 'Popular' is a highly contested term in this context. My usage here relates to practices that, in transcending the elite/non-elite dichotomy articulated most clearly by Peter Burke (*Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, London: Temple Smith, 1978), were widespread, familiar practices easily accessible to most of the population. See Reay, Barry, *Popular Cultures in England: 1550-1750*, (London & New York: Longman, 1998) pp.1-3 & 198-223.

not be glad to have the niggardly, rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?’ (2.5.4-5). But this development in the theatrical representation of cozenage to include jesting (which is not done for material or economic gain) is itself a deception – for although Malvolio’s antics will be laughed at by both onstage and offstage audiences, one of which has indeed paid money for the experience. The gulling of Malvolio thus demonstrates a movement from the representation of cozenage in drama (such as that seen in the Simpcox scene of *2 Henry VI*) to its more pervasive and embodied incorporation into the forms of dramatic representation itself. Malvolio is being set up to be humiliated for the entertainment of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Fabian and Maria, but their jest cozens the audience – it functions as a mode of performance for the fictional characters (dependent on their construction as an onstage audience, who, in this case, hide in the box-tree (2.5.13-8)), but the staging of this on an early modern stage was another mode of performance (whose success was dependent on an offstage audience’s engagement and very different mode of participation). Successful jests, theatre and cozenage all relied on the willingness of audiences and victims to be attracted and engaged by the practices of those doing the jesting, acting and cozenage, it was this that constituted auditors, spectators and conies as necessary participants in the events they were witness to.¹⁰⁵ What *Twelfth Night* exploits and celebrates are the practices common to jesting and cozenage – practices which early modern theatre was uniquely well placed to replicate and expand on as it turned the fixed place of the stage into the experiential

¹⁰⁵ Arguing that ‘jest was more of an event than an utterance’, Pamela Allen Brown notes the central role of the audience in the construction of early modern jests [Brown, Pamela Allen, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2003) pp.1-32].

spaces of performance, simultaneously turning its capacity to deceive to its own economic advantage.

If the material gain to be had from cozenage was the financial loss of the cony, its pleasure (for its practitioners) derived from their humiliation – when cozenage is staged, however, the audience's pleasure lies in both the humiliation of the victim and their recognition of the artfulness, the underlying logics, of the practices through which this has come about. Maria reinforces this by calling their plan 'jesting', but this coincides with the dropping of the letter, the men hiding and the exit of Maria (spying Malvolio) (2.5.10-20). Thus the jest, the pleasure, is a spatial production – the actors turn the place of the stage into a space of entrapment into which the audience sees Malvolio walk ('the trout that must be caught with tickling' (2.5.19-20)), but enabling also the audience to appreciate the cleverness of the way by which the trap has been set. The audience's pleasure is heightened by their witnessing the production of this space, then having their perspective on it aligned through the mediated focus of an expectant Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian (who all remain onstage, hidden from Malvolio but visible to the audience). Keir Elam argues that, in *'Twelfth Night'*, the spectator plays the role of the co-protagonist', a role assigned by a level of comedy that 'invite[s] an unusual degree of audience complicity with the main action [...] encouraging us to join the company of the plotters hiding in the box tree or sneering in the dark room'.¹⁰⁶ This is not quite the case, however, and Elam's assumption that the stage action is experienced by an audience as a dichotomy between main action and (presumably) secondary (or lesser) action is a product of a reading of the

¹⁰⁶ Elam Keir (ed.), *Twelfth Night: or What You Will*, London: Cengage (Arden Third Series), 2008, p.7

stage in the light of literary approaches to the text. Of course, the actors playing Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian have the potential to draw the audience into their sport, and so the audience's relationship to the action will be nuanced by a sense of complicity in it. But more important is the fact that the offstage audience always experiences the 3 men as a self-constituted onstage audience – so any argument for (offstage) audience complicity first of all has to account for their experience of the action as a spatial product, the pleasure of which lies in the fact that, though they might be encouraged 'to join the company of the plotters', they are precisely not with them as both they and the plotters are in different places. The audience's space is a product of the physical distance between them, the plotters and Malvolio, and this enables them to experience more than simply a sense of oneness with the plotters – for it also produces a critical distance enabling their identification with Malvolio as victim and to take pleasure in his performance. The complexity of these (spatially produced) experiences and perceptions nurtures, and is sustained by, an equally complex set of perspectives and critical attitudes to the stage action as a whole.

The dropping of the letter does more than produce a point of focus for the stage, however. Emptying the space of characters, who move to its edges and look in on it (and, in particular, to the letter situated as its point of focus), produces a space not only of entrapment but also of enticement – as it empties the space around it, the dropped letter simultaneously charges it with expectation. The letter functions as bait because it is transformed into an object of attraction with the power and the potential to deceive, to deflect its victim from his intended path. Like Greene's Verser (who is planted at a

particular point in the city where he can encounter the cony), or the ‘common trulls [who] walk abroad [...] as stales to draw men into hell’, dropping the letter is a theatrical practice aimed at alluring, turning a place into a space, setting up an encounter and initiating the audience’s expectations in relation to the space.¹⁰⁷ Maria’s role in this act of cozenage aligns her with those women who operate collusively with their (male) partners: her participation is restricted to the set-up only, the execution of the jest witnessed only by the men. She exits for the duration of Malvolio’s appearance, and only returns when he has gone and the trickery has been effected.

The power of attractiveness to allure and deflect people from their intended paths is a feature of cozenage that the cony-catching literature makes much of. The dropped letter functions as a similar source of power in this scene; not only an object deliberately placed to attract and distract Malvolio (thereby drawing him into the cozenage being practised on him), it also becomes the audience’s object of focus – who experience it as productive of and central to the deceptively empty space around it. Attractiveness and attraction are central to the ways by which cozenage works, and just as Harman and Greene present their rogues and cony-catchers as attractive characters whose practices rely on alluring their victims, so this scene explores the power of attraction through the presentation of characters and practices engaged in trickery *and* embodies the same theatrical capacity to attract, engage and contract its audience into its terms. Berry’s binary distinction between likeable and dislikeable characters is used to justify his assertion that ‘it is in the gulling actions that Sir Toby appears at his least appealing’, but this analysis fails to account for

¹⁰⁷ Kinney, pp.167 & 178.

the huge appeal of those theatrical characters whose talent and delight is rooted in the trickery and deception they practice – Sir Toby is appealing precisely because he both helps to attract Malvolio into the space and makes the transgressive nature of this attractive to the audience.¹⁰⁸ Tim Carroll, rehearsing this scene at Shakespeare’s Globe in 2002, realised that the constant interjections by the three plotters (while Malvolio occupied the main stage area, and spoke and performed for himself) were not about encouraging the audience ‘to join the company of the plotters hiding in the box tree’, rather the opposite – they constantly assert the attractiveness of Malvolio, and remind the audience of the total unreality, the artificial nature, of the theatrical situation: ‘It’s a game’.¹⁰⁹ If the audience is being asked to take on any role here, it is not that of ‘co-protagonist’, rather ‘to be the imaginary audience that admires this fantasy Malvolio’ (which is a very different audience to that in the box tree).¹¹⁰ This is made possible by the critical distance enjoyed by the offstage audience between them and a place of performance that includes both the ‘self-glorifying’ Malvolio and the three artful (and hiding) plotters whose practices have constructed and continue to define this event for them – whose own reactions to Malvolio’s performance constitute part of the audience’s pleasure.¹¹¹

For the actor, Malvolio’s performance in this scene has the potential to create its own power of attraction (both for the three onlookers and for the offstage audience). Maria,

¹⁰⁸ Berry, p.113.

¹⁰⁹ Carroll, Tim, “Practising Behaviour to his own Shadow” in Carson, Christie and Farah Karim-Cooper (eds.), *Shakespeare’s Globe: a Theatrical Experiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp.36-44 (p.38).

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

announcing Malvolio's entrance, prepares the audience for a man who 'has been yonder i'the sun practising behaviour to his own shadow this half-hour' and calls them to 'observe him for the love of mockery' (2.5.14-5). Malvolio's performance provides plenty of opportunity for histrionic excess and exuberance (including the manner with which he 'jets under his advanced plumes' (2.5.29)); but, as the above example from the Shakespeare's Globe production indicates, his contributions are inscribed within a broader texture – the interjections and commentaries of the 3 plotters providing a richer framework within and against which Malvolio's words and actions are experienced. The practices and language of the 3 plotters function to produce and nuance Malvolio's attractiveness, they also mediate the audience's focus on and responses to the stage action as a whole. The spatial practices of cozenage find their own enlarged expression here: the stage becomes an increasingly compelling source of attraction, with the theatrical production expanding the space of performance to include an offstage audience for whom the whole event has been constructed, whose pleasure is the goal of the performance – and in expectation of which pleasure they have parted with their money.

Malvolio's opening 6 lines enable him to take the focus and to consolidate his role in relation to the space prepared for him by the plotters. However, this space also functions as a distinct performance space within the larger stage space – from where he can speak and act for the audience in his imagination and for the two audiences actually watching him. The boundaries of Malvolio's performance space are enforced and made visible not only by the physical presence of the plotters but also by their comments on Malvolio's performance. Malvolio's lines are followed by comments from each of the plotters,

establishing a pattern whereby his lines are (from the audience's perspective) woven into a broader texture that always includes the plotters. Malvolio's performance continues, but not until he has picked up the letter does he speak at length again – so, although Malvolio's performance (and space) is marked out as a separate element within the overall performance, in terms of its actual perception by the audience it is merely one aspect of a more expansive dialogue and set of stage actions constituting a broader production of space. When Malvolio moves towards the letter, Fabian again evokes the practices of trapping and hunting that have helped shape the scene so far: 'Now is the woodcock near the gin' (2.5.82). However, it is not only Malvolio who is being seduced and tricked by what he sees, so too are the offstage audience who, fully aware of its fictive nature as performance, still allow themselves to be enthralled to its artificiality and obvious constructedness.

Ubersfeld describes the pleasure of the spectator as one rooted in desire, in lack; the tension between the presence (the reality and closeness) of the stage and its separateness (its otherness) produces a frustration, a dissatisfaction that is 'the essential situation of the spectator'.¹¹² As cozenage worked through deception to produce a space whose efficacy depended on its attractiveness, so this scene works through a similar set of practices – Malvolio's antics are a performance, productive of a space whose power to produce pleasure (its efficacy) depends on his power to attract (and the power of the

¹¹² Ubersfeld, Anne. 'The Pleasure of the Spectator' in *Modern Drama* XXV:1 (1982) 127-39 (p.138). This definition is not without its problems, one could equally argue that the pleasure of the stage comes from its superfluity or abundance – that successful theatre exceeds an audience's expectations, and leaves them feeling more than satisfied. From such a perspective, the audience's sense of lack in this scene from *Twelfth Night* is produced in order to be filled by the antics and cleverness of the actors.

three plotters to encourage and enhance that attraction). The audience is situated by the actors in a place of lack, for they are not with the plotters in the box-tree, and their desire is not only to enjoy Malvolio's self-glorification, it is also for the fun to be had at the plotter's expense (as Malvolio's performance mocks them). The cony is an unwilling victim of cozenage who unwittingly falls into the cozeners' trap; the spectator, on the other hand, is a willing one who knowingly goes along with the deceptions being practiced on him – but what both cony and spectator have in common is the fact that both fall captive to an elusive space, the product of skilled practitioners whose success at turning places into spaces is precisely that which secures their economic advantage over and against their victims' economic losses.

Though Fabian's 'O peace, now he's deeply in. Look how imagination blows him' (2.5.39-40) suggests an absorptive Malvolio, any absorption is also a product of the space he has entered and inflected through his own performance. As Malvolio then verbalises his imaginings (his marriage to Olivia and his dismissal of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew), his absorptive state dissolves and the space around him becomes a more anxious and energised one – the increasing fury of the onlookers needing to be constantly contained by Fabian's 'O peace, peace' (2.5.48, 54, 62, 73). 'The space of speech envelops the space of bodies', and the dialogue at this point saturates the performance space in very particular ways to produce a quality of space that is experienced in relation to the ways by which the various voices relate to and compete with each other within the place of the stage.¹¹³ Noting that the voice is 'not a *thing* but an *effect*', the four voices on stage at this

¹¹³ Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) p.402.

point contribute differently to an overall spatial texture that is still experienced as a singularity by the audience – with Malvolio speaking largely out and into the audience, the plotters aligning the audience onto Malvolio while simultaneously speaking to each other but for the audience.¹¹⁴ The complexity of this space is a significant part of its attraction – though the audience is being enjoined by the 3 plotters to watch Malvolio, the appeal is actually to watch those watchers watching Malvolio, who performs for them (the offstage audience) but not for the onstage audience.:

The *point* of plays like *Othello* or *Twelfth Night* or *The Winter's Tale* is not to make the audience want to *be* Othello, Viola, Malvolio or Leontes, or even Perdita, but to stimulate and render meaningful the desire to *watch* them, and (in the best theatre) to engage the consequences of this act of involved, disengaged, seeing.¹¹⁵ (Italics original)

Though Malvolio is falling into the trap set for him, so too is the audience – and when Malvolio picks up and responds to the letter, it loses its pregnancy and transfers its power of attraction to Malvolio. The space produced by Maria's dropping of the letter, her exit and the plotters' retreating to hide behind the box-tree now mutates, its focus is no longer the letter, rather it is Malvolio – who holds the letter in his hand and whose performance is now shaped both by his reactions to its contents and the reactions of the plotters to him. Decidedly not 'a puppet on a string', for the actor playing Malvolio, the space has been produced for a performance whose limits will be set by his own imagination, talents, and the forms of engagement he enjoys with his audiences.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Smith, Bruce R., *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999) p.222.

¹¹⁵ Worthen, W.B., *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.101.

¹¹⁶ Greif, Karen, "Plays and Playing in 'Twelfth Night'" in *Shakespeare Survey* 34 (1981) 121-30 (p.127).

The texture of this section continues to be heavily inflected by the language of hunting coupled with the visibly staged practices of deception; the language of hunting is not merely a poetic device, its deployment in a context where Malvolio has been so visibly ensnared underlies the operations of power at work here, and their nature as a form of deception designed to catch a 'cony'. Seeing the letter, Malvolio 'is the woodcock near the gin' (2.5.82), opening it 'wins him, liver and all' (2.5.94), the letter is then a 'dish o'poison' prepared for him (2.5.111), and whose success in attracting him transforms Malvolio into a 'staniel' (a hunting bird hovering over its victim) (2.5.112), eventually a 'sowter' or 'cur' – a hound that has sniffed out a (false) scent (2.5.120-25). The dropping of this language and these interjections for the duration of Malvolio's reading of, and responses to, the letter produces an uninterrupted focus on a Malvolio clearly enthralled to the letter and so equally clearly ensnared by the plotters' practices. The success of the plotters' enterprise is made evident by their silence – as, in the contexts of performance, their interjections serve to reinforce the mechanism through which the deception is working, so their silence isolates Malvolio's performance and enables it to be seen and celebrated as the culmination of their work. The scene has served to 'stimulate and render meaningful the desire to watch' Malvolio by producing his performance as a form of cozenage; exposing it as a consequence of the deceitful practices of others engages the audience in an act of spectating that at once disengages them (for they are not in the same place, on the stage, in the box-tree, with the plotters) and involves them (for they are contracted into the terms of performance through a spatiality that is purposefully contrived to maximise their

potential for deriving pleasure from it – *the* pleasure on which the players and their profession are ultimately dependent).¹¹⁷

Having watched the practices of cozenage take effect, uninterrupted or contained by the language of cozenage, Malvolio's exit returns the scene to the language of trickery, sport and jest with which it opened:

FABIAN

I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands
[...]

SIR TOBY

And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.
[...]

Shall I play my freedom at tray-trip and become thy bondslave?

MARIA

If you will then see the fruits of the sport
[...]

SIR TOBY

Thou most excellent devil of wit. (2.5.174-200)

Maria's entrance, accompanied by her welcome as 'my noble gull-catcher' (2.5.181), not only rounds off a section of the play rooted in the spatial practices of cozenage, it also points the audience forward in anticipation of further pleasure to be derived from them: 'If you will then see the fruits of the sport [...] follow me' (2.5.191-8). Though this particular act of cozenage is brought to a close, its capacity for producing pleasure is not contained by the scene in which it is performed. For the spectator, successful theatre produces a sense of frustration, and, at this point in the play, the situation of the spectator turns from one of satisfaction (from seeing the successful gulling of Malvolio) to one of dissatisfaction (for the scene ends by producing and encouraging another desire,

¹¹⁷ Worthen, 1997 (p.101).

the desire to see the actual encounter between Malvolio and Olivia).¹¹⁸ As the plotters were seen carefully to produce the space of entrapment into which Malvolio walked, so they now initiate a sense of expectation that begins both to produce the space that accompanies his next entrance and to define its quality – the end of 2.5 is also a preparation for that moment in 3.4 when Olivia and Maria's space is interrupted and punctured by Malvolio's arrival '*in yellow stockings and cross-gartered*' (3.4.15SD). The plotters have not only begun the preparation and production of the space into which the audience will next see Malvolio walk, they have also begun the production of the broader space through which this entrance will be experienced by the audience.

The pleasure of the audience in 2.5 is a result of their encountering the production of the space of Malvolio's entrapment and performance (the obviously constructed nature of a space that Malvolio treats as a place, familiar and benign, encourages a delight in those stage logics through which the space of performance has come about), it is also a result of the audience's experience of this space as one purposefully created to maximise their ability to derive pleasure from it. Their pleasure in 3.4 is produced differently, however, and is dependent on the actors obscuring the constructedness of the space in which Malvolio (and, later in the scene, Sir Andrew, Viola and Antonio) performs. The end of 2.5 begins this process of obscuration; though the plotters hand the stage over to Viola and Feste, this is just one pause in a spatial mutation that will lead to a series of performances (beginning with Malvolio's in 2.4) for an expanding onstage audience in which there are no eavesdroppers – the exit of the plotters in 2.5 marks a shift from the highly constructed

¹¹⁸ Ubersfeld, p.138.

and mediated site of (Malvolio's) performance to a more open, less obviously constructed and mediated site of theatrical production.

The marginality of the London stage, Weimann notes, enabled it to participate from inside the walls of the playhouse with the 'world identified with scandalous licentiousness, with "incontinent" forms of pastime' outside the playhouse walls.¹¹⁹ In the contexts of dramatic performance, this incontinence extended not only to theatre's presentation of 'shadowy' themes and ideas, but also to its capacity for drawing on, (re-)producing and foregrounding the spatial practices of a city commonly presented as unstable and vulnerable to unpredictable change.¹²⁰ London theatre's liminality, its capacity for effacing the distance between a world beyond the playhouse walls (or, in the case of *Twelfth Night*, the walls of Middle Temple Hall) and that within, is most potently described through the scenes leading up to and including that where Malvolio presents himself to Olivia (3.4). Particularly in this section of the play, the stage is being worked to create an evolving spatiality whose degree of constructedness and manipulation become increasingly obscured by those practices which produce it. The stage becomes a site of continuous preparation; as characters set up and enjoy the gulling of others, so the stage remains a (constant) place the experience of which depends (for the characters) on their role as either cony or cony-catcher, (for the audience) on their recognition of and identification with the space as one not so much contiguous with that beyond the playhouse walls as part (or an extension) of it.

¹¹⁹ Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.195.

¹²⁰ *ibid.* For a discussion of the various arguments concerning the perception of early modern London as stable/unstable, see Griffiths, pp.27-35.

Further preparation for enjoying the success of the gulling initiated in 2.5 begins in 3.2 when Sir Toby and Fabian set up another trick with another letter – this time the intention being to gull Sir Andrew. Not only does this encourage further the audience's appetite for trickery, Maria's entry connects this act of gulling to the last one – and reasserts their trickery as a form of jest whose reward is the pleasure derived from it: 'If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourself into stitches, follow me. Yon gull Malvolio is turned heathen' (3.2.64-6). Maria's first appearance since 2.5 is a reminder of her role in setting-up the gulling of Malvolio, but it also points the audience towards the shortly to be enjoyed success of what was initiated then, and further re-inscribes her within those practices through which this has been achieved. The associations between her and those women who work in partnership with male rogues and cozeners (scouting, surveying the territory, setting up the trick) are again suggested as she declares how she has 'dogged [Malvolio] like his murderer' (3.2.72).

Maria's leading the men off stage prepares the stage for the entry of Sebastian and Antonio, and lays the foundation for the theatrical trickery of 3.4 in which Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian. However, this scene between Sebastian and Antonio (3.3) has another important function in terms of the play's production of space, for its numerous references to the immediate environs of Illyria more intimately appeal to the geography of London, inscribing any audience for a London performance within a broader spatial context that draws on their experiences of the city (indeed, this could work for a performance in any city, since the specific references to London could easily be altered to reflect the local geography). 3.3 draws in London and the experience and perception of its

streets and suburbs – thereby producing, for the spectator, a more expansive and immediate world for the action (and problematising any clear-cut distinction between playing in the world and the world of the play):

SEBASTIAN

Shall we go see the relics of this town? (3.3.19)

[...]

Let us satisfy our eyes with the memorials and
Things of fame that do renown this city. (3.3.22-4)

[...]

ANTONIO

I do not without danger walk these streets. (3.3.25)

[...]

If I be lapsed in this place I shall pay dear. (3.3.36-7)

SEBASTIAN

Do not then walk too open. (3.3.37)

[...]

ANTONIO

In the south suburbs, at the Elephant, is best
to lodge. (3.3.39-40)

[...]

You beguile the time and feed your knowledge
with viewing of the town. (3.3.41-2)

[...]

To th'Elephant. (3.3.48)

This concentration of references and allusions to the city's built environment produces (in the contexts of a London performance) a particular density of experience that will be nuanced and sustained by the spectators' individual experiences and perceptions of the metropolis. However, it would be misplaced to view these references as the product solely of theatre's marginality (geographic, social and cultural), a consequence of its ability to look into the city from its outskirts. *Twelfth Night*, like others of Shakespeare's plays, was conceived for performance in numerous locations – the suburbs, the City (Middle Temple Hall), at court and on tour – and cannot have been shaped solely by the demands of its potential playhouse performances. Wherever it was performed, in and around London, it

necessarily drew the spectators' experiences of that city into its texture of performance – with the same principle applying in other locations (a performance in Dover, for example, by changing 'th'Elephant' to the name of another local inn, brothel or other establishment in the north/south/east/west of that town would, for its local audiences, similarly weave their experiences of that town into the texture of the performance).

The exchange between Sebastian and Antonio has the potential for comedy, but its references to London's urban environment exploit unease about the stability and security of that environment. The city's attractions are openly acknowledged (it is a city renowned for its 'memorials and things of fame' (3.3.23-4)), yet its dangers lie in the practices of inhabitants who make Antonio anxious about walking its streets. This conflation of attraction and danger epitomises a common perception of early modern London – whose beguiling appearance (it was constantly asserted in the cony-catching pamphlets) obscured its capacity to destroy. The cony-catching pamphlets make much of the abilities of cozeners to appeal to the eyes of their victims (whether through chance encounters, the use of wanton women, a dropped coin, etc) in order to bring about their ruin; for Dekker, London was 'attir'd like a Bride, drawing all that look upon thee to be in love with thee, but there is much harlot in thine eyes'.¹²¹ These anxieties were essentially spatial ones, however, the product of that gap between the logic and order implied by the city as a fixed and ordered place and the actual experience and perception of it in daily life.

¹²¹ Quoted in Dionne and Mentz, p.214.

Sebastian and Antonio do more than simply draw the spectators' experiences and perceptions of London into the fabric of performance, their exit (Sebastian to 'beguile the time [...] with viewing of the town' (3.3.41-2), Antonio 'to th'Elephant' (3.3.48)) coincides with Antonio lending Sebastian his purse so that, should his eye 'light upon some toy' he might buy it. London is, for Antonio, a place of 'idle markets' (i.e. luxuries) (3.3.46); so the associations he describes between beauty, danger, luxury and money come about at precisely the point in the play where the action seems to spill into the streets of the metropolis – which is also the point at which Olivia and Maria enter, and the gulling of Malvolio that began in 2.5 finds its culmination. Malvolio's performance is a kind of attractive ugliness – though, for the onstage audience, the reward lies in the jest, for the offstage audience the reward lies simultaneously in the grotesqueness of his performance, its attractiveness and the admiration it inspires for the skill of the player able to pull it off. This is an intricately woven moment of space: the performance draws on the spectators' experiences of the capital at the same time as the action seems to open out into that capital; it feeds off and sustains anxieties about those transgressive uses that turn London's fixed and seemingly stable places into the unstable and unpredictable spaces of experience and perception; and implicated in all of this is the power of money to generate spatial practices founded on transgression and deception. It is an implication subtly denied to the theatre audience in the contexts of performance – who assent to the practices of deception as enthusiastically as they receive and respond to Malvolio's histrionics. The audience wants a 'bad' performance from Malvolio, that is where the pleasure comes from – and where the skill of the player lies. His performance produces its own attraction, but not before this has been contextualised and brought to bear on a

wider set of perceptions relating to the metropolis and its relationship to those whose uses of it for personal, economic advantage, rely on their capacity to exploit its formal properties of place. The theatre audience participates in, admires and helps to produce the same set of spatial practices that would, outside the playhouse walls, constitute the very ground of their fears. It is this that marks out the early modern theatrical experience as especially transgressive, and especially successful – for its spatial practices were clearly exposed for all to see, there was no attempt made to disguise their constructedness and artificiality, yet spectators willingly parted with their money for the experience of being gulled.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The role of space was crucial both to successful cozenage and successful theatre. Brown notes the essentially shared and fluid nature of the early modern neighbourhood, and demonstrates that it was the primary space of social interaction: ‘the prime arena for transactions between the individual and the state and between neighbour and neighbour’.¹²² As ‘the jest implies a fairly transparent domestic space – a permeable household that is not a walled terminus but a node in a network of people and activities, economic and sexual, [so] the basic similar distinction available for early moderns was not that of the public and individual space but that of the public and the shared’.¹²³ The transactional nature and practices of everyday life in early modern London eradicated the possibility for most people of what we might conceptualise as private or individual space. London-based theatrical production offered its own transactional exchanges, at the heart

¹²² Brown, 2003 (pp.35-6).

¹²³ Brown, 2003 (p.36).

of which lay its capacity for attracting spectators and contracting them into relationships whose reward was pleasure (for the spectators) and economic gain (for the practitioners) – exchanges made possible by theatre’s ability to recognise, manipulate, transgress and subvert the rules of place in order to produce spaces that were enjoyed by audiences who experienced them as *both* public and shared. Part of the audience’s pleasure derived also from the sense of familiarity with the practices which brought successful theatrical spaces about – practices that theatrical production shared with cozenage. Theatrical production held a similar fascination and appeal for its audiences as the rogue literature did for its audiences, for both theatrical production and the literature’s presentation of cozenage exposed audiences to those spatial practices of deception that corresponded to their perceptions of how transgressive space was actually produced in the period – the difference being that only in theatrical production was the audience invited actually to experience and participate in the production of this transgressive spatiality.

Cozenage was never simply a matter of rogues or cony-catchers playing tricks on unsuspecting victims, it was a thoroughly material activity whose end was material reward for the cozeners, humiliation, resentment and material loss for the cony. The rogue literature reflects no one clear attitude to the practices it describes. Obviously interested, it was at various times condemnatory, disgusted, amused and delighted by the tricks that people found to play on each other. Much of the literature that both advertised and warned of cozenage expresses an ambiguous and ambivalent set of moral tones and attitudes towards the practices described. However, even at its most critical and censorious, the literature always makes clear that, to the authors, the actual practices of

rogues and cozeners made fascinating reading. Neither was cozenage seen simply as a deviant, subversive and (from a modern perspective) criminal element of London life; the popularity of its representation in literature, and the popularity of its performance and embodiment on the theatrical stage, point to a more fundamental perception of it as intrinsic to the experience of life – especially in the capital (for whose population survival meant a constant negotiation of circumstances, keeping alert to the advantages to be made out of every situation). In an overcrowded and transient capital, the risk was always that an encounter or transaction was not what it appeared to be, with the very real potential to make one a victim of someone else's opportunism. Authors such as Harman and Greene, in associating cozenage with rogues (surely, those most required to live by their wits), conflate the two; but this chapter argues that, in early modern London, cozenage denotes a tactics of 'making do' deployed at all levels of society. *Twelfth Night* worked because it was not only plausible that courtiers, citizens and ladies-in-waiting were all equally disposed to, knowledgeable of and experienced and complicit in the practices of cozenage, but because the play implicates a similarly knowledgeable audience – who are contracted into the terms of its performance to be knowingly (and willingly) gulled by it.

Cozenage produced and participated in a number of economies, at the same time it participated in a notion of the market characterised not as a fixed location but as 'place, action, demand, opportunity'.¹²⁴ The placelessness of *Twelfth Night* exploits and participates in 'an acquisitive impulse that was quickly becoming characteristic of the

¹²⁴ Bruster, Douglas, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.15.

culture at large' – the market went wherever the play was performed (for, wherever the play was performed, it was performed for money).¹²⁵ Whatever else professional theatre was in the period, it was (like cozenage) an economic activity. The comedy of *The Comedy of Errors* begins with a trick at 1.2, not with a rogue or cony-catcher but a merchant advising Antipholus of Syracuse (another merchant) to 'give out you are of Epidamnum, Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate' (1.2.1-2). There is no sense of moral indignation or censure here (which might be expected given these characters' social standings). The merchant's advice is morally defensible not only because it represents a tactical response to the strategies of state (and so is necessary for individual survival), but also because the merchants are operating in and necessary to a market practice that was essentially fluid and opportunistic. The scene ends with Antipholus fearful that he has been tricked out of his money:

They say this town is full of cozenage,
 As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
 Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
 Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
 Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
 And many such-like liberties of sin:
 If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.
 I'll to the Centaur to go seek this slave;
 I greatly fear my money is not safe. (1.2.97-105)

For the audience, the pleasure here lies in the awareness that Antipholus *has* been tricked – though not in the way he thinks. It is a pleasure derived from the role accorded to the audience by the theatrical production, whereby their discrepant awareness frees them to enjoy Antipholus's ignorance: his wondering if he has been tricked or not, if things are as they seem or not, is the audience's pleasure.

¹²⁵ Bruster, pp.15-6.

Though the social deviance that constituted cozenage was at one level both condemned and criminalised, in the theatre and the rogue literature it was also a source of engagement and fascination – and the suggestion is that it was perceived as both widespread and a common feature of everyday life. The pleasures derived from being allowed into the practices of cozenage helped establish it as a popular literary and theatrical subject matter – and both the texts and the plays discussed in this chapter deliberately play on their capacity to effect complex but enjoyable relationships between audiences, subject matter and the practices of daily life. It was this creative drive to forge and develop these connections that enabled the representation of cozenage (in print and on the stage) to help establish an authority for those spatial practices cozenage shared with theatrical production – and it may be that, inadvertently, it also helped establish the authority of the myth that the country was indeed awash with ‘cozenage [...] nimble jugglers [...] dark-working sorcerers [...] soul-killing witches [...] disguised cheaters [and] prating mountebanks’ (*The Comedy of Errors*, 1.2.97-101). With that in mind, one should be wary of taking too much from the rogue literature at face-value, for a principal aim of this literature was to efface its main declared purpose – not so much to alert bewildered and vulnerable citizens to the nature of the tricks potentially being enacted against them, rather the aim was to entertain them. This purpose is, of course, more obviously seen in the relationships between cozenage and theatrical production, for here the spatial mechanisms of cozenage are revealed and playfully exploited. Both the presentation of Simpcox and the gulling of Malvolio expose the practices of performance and align these with the practices of cozenage – both presentations produce their own highly and visibly

constructed moments of space, and both are experienced primarily as entertainment, a source of pleasure rather than censure.

When Malvolio, believing himself to have been successful in his wooing of Olivia, gives thanks to Jove as ‘the doer of this’ success (3.4.79-80), the audience knows not only that the real architects have been Maria, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian, but that this has not been Malvolio’s success but his humiliation and downfall – which is the basis of the audience’s pleasure. But this moment has been developing over many scenes; so Fabian’s ‘If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction’ (3.4.123-24) does more than ‘conflate dramatic and fictional time with the real time of the performance’, for what has been produced has been a moment of space whose theatrical success depends on the performers’ ability to manipulate the place of the stage to produce a spatiality conflating not only the now and then but also the here and there. Fabian’s line relies for its effect on the fact that though, at one level, Malvolio’s behaviour might be improbable, in terms of the practices it defines and through which it has been constructed, it is perceived by the audience as all too possible. The scene itself replicates and is produced through a set of practices that were, if not commonly experienced, commonly feared – drawing on and substantiating contemporary anxieties about identity and place and the relationships between them.

Early modern plays (not just in their plots and staged representations, but also in their structure and the ways by which audiences were engaged and contracted into their performances) took great interest and delight in cozenage. In the context of popular,

professional theatre these two strands rarely existed independently of each other, rather they were constantly knitted together – Weimann’s bifurcation between ‘the play in the world’ and ‘playing in the world’ becomes, in this context, an unhelpful one when seeking to understand how those interactions and knitting-togethers determined spectators’ experiences and helped shape the meanings they took from productions.¹²⁶ In its staged representations, theatre fully exploited many of the same dramatic possibilities that were also essential to cozenage (mistaken identities and motives, rehearsed encounters, disguises, entrances, exits and stagings, etc.). Unlike cozenage, however, (where these dramatic elements were contained within the trick they constituted, a trick that was not dependent on, nor performed for, an audience) in theatrical production these possibilities were woven not only into the plots enacted onstage, but also into the overall texture of a dramaturgy within which audiences were appealed to as collaborators in a network of relationships and dynamics that allowed them to enjoy (vicariously) some of the experience of cozenage, but without risk to themselves.

But this is not entirely true of course; for the perception was that there was always a risk of cozenage – on the way to, at, or on the way home from the playhouse or performance, as anywhere else. The tactics of making do (which cozenage participated in) was a constituent part of everyday life. So, a spectator at a performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, who had successfully negotiated their way to the theatre, purchased entry without losing their purse (or letting it be seen), was now swamped in a press of bodies watching

¹²⁶ For example, see Weimann, Robert, *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.185-86; Bruster, Douglas and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare’s Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) pp.31-56.

Antipholus mistake Dromio of Ephesus for his servant (Antipholus thinking he has been cozened out of his money). Aware of the potential dangers around them (and those to be encountered again on the way home), the spectator would have been aware not of a separation or distinction between their world, the world of the theatrical production and the fictional world of the play, rather a single world constituted by the interplay between them. Antipholus's 'They say this town is full of cozenage' (1.2.97), like Fabian's 'If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction' (3.4.123-24), resonated (for those attending performances in London) beyond the fictional locations of their plays (Ephesus and Illyria) and drew on spectators' experiences and perceptions of everyday life more generally in the capital. The social and intellectual pleasures of the theatre event itself, and the story of the play (the circumstances that have led Antipholus to fear that, newly arrived in Ephesus, he has already been cozened out of all his money, or Fabian's own involvement in the setting up and execution of the trick against Malvolio), together provided a performative context for the words, with the potential to generate humour, sympathy, but also able to kindle and heighten spectators' own anxieties – and so increase their pleasure of the theatrical experience. This is just one example of the ways by which spectators' immediate and past, singular and common, experiences were woven into the texture of a production, helping to determine the significances they gave to it and the understandings they took from it – establishing the spectator not simply as a conduit of significances and understandings, but as the originator of meaning.

The rogue literature translates an absence into a presence: the authors' frequent use of first-person narratives, their citing of (purportedly) real people, places and incidents, are

an ingenious attempt to deny this absence. But they are devices which betray their own ideological work: fundamentally an ideology of language, these texts are the birth pangs of a modern scriptural economy whereby primordial embodied experience is replaced by the language that comes to stand in its place. And it is a translation we are easily blinded to when we choose to interpret the texts as historically accurate records of the people and practices they describe. Theatrical production was also (amongst other things) the translation of an absence into a presence. Unlike the literature, however, (which aimed to deny that absence) the dynamics of theatrical production required the foregrounding of that absence – so that what replaced it was not (as in the rogue literature) a text substituting itself for ‘the real thing’, rather a presence, a performance essential to whose nature was the publicly shared acceptance of its contrivance (although this contrivance could operate at various levels within a single production – which could, at some points, work within conceptions of verisimilitude, at other points play meta-theatrically with the notion of contrivance). However, the presence of theatrical performance was an ephemeral and elusive one, which those attending fully accepted – indeed, what they wanted. Common playing contracted its audiences into a mode of production central to which was a sense of their active participation – which is why moments like the presentation and unmasking of Simpcox, the gulling of Malvolio and Antipholus’s confusion functioned not as comic moments punctuating their plays’ main themes and ideas, rather they constituted the spatial interplay that was always at work in performance: between the stage, the auditorium and the world. Topical and particularly rich in the associations and connections they could effect, they just happened to be particularly playful, pregnant and more heightened, moments in this spatial interplay.

CHAPTER 4

ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have argued that playing in the early modern period relied on stage logics and practices that enabled players to appropriate the time and place of performance by responding tactically to those opportunities that presented themselves for heightening an audience's experience of a production. Although players were able to operate individually to the opportunities that presented themselves for audience engagement, or heightening of the narrative, or performing a character, as has been shown in the previous chapter, this was also a matter of collaborative practice between players – and between players and spectators. The playhouse's fascination with the practices of cozenage (as the previous chapter has demonstrated) related to its own capacity for intervening in the rules of place to turn seemingly stable locations into entertaining and more unpredictable sites of encounter and ambivalence. Shakespeare's staging of cozenage, his exploitation of presumed boundaries and the careful preparation of spaces that are subverted, deflected or nuanced by the entrances of (often unsuspecting) characters suggest a highly collaborative approach on the part of early modern players to the construction of these plays in performance.

This chapter explores the collaborative, ensemble nature of common playing in the early modern period, and examines some of the relationships implied by the playtexts between the practices of playing and spectating in the playhouse. It begins with an examination of

some of the practices and stage logics deployed by modern ensemble companies working in the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe in London, and of other companies that take similarly collaborative approaches to the performance of early modern plays. Acknowledging their audiences and places of performance, and building the relationships with them into their dramaturgy, the productions and companies described below all aim to create a sense of collective pleasure and endeavour in the processes of production. Their nature and quality as playful and collaborative productions (between actors, spectators and their places of performance) is revealed as significant a factor in the shaping of the work as is the need to tell a particular story and communicate particular themes and ideas. These modern ensemble approaches to the performance of early modern plays are explored for what they reveal of an approach to playing that relies on highly creative and productive engagements between actors, audiences and architectures.

Tim Etchells' (Forced Entertainment) definition of 'play' as 'a state in which meaning is in flux, in which possibility thrives, in which visions multiply' provides a notion of play/-playfulness that underpins much of the work of those contemporary ensemble companies and productions described in this chapter, the implications of which in relation to common playing in the early modern period are also explored here.¹ Underpinning the playful ensemble practices and stage logics described in the first part of the chapter is an inherent instability, which (though highly productive and necessary for the quality of performance these companies strive for) is resistant to the discursive logics of conventional stage practices and the stable meanings and interpretations they authorise.

¹ In Murray, Simon and John Keefe, *Physical Theatres: an Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p.147.

This chapter challenges the notion that early modern performance practices are wholly unknowable (or lost) to us because they were not textually recorded. Knowledge of practices is not the same as knowledge through practices, and this chapter suggests that the practices and logics underpinning modern ensemble and collaborative performances reveal the possibility for a different (and differently authorised) knowledge of Shakespeare – one that is not constrained by the demands of formal, discursive logics, but is no less self-consistent and logical for that. Arguing that common players in early modern England did not work simply as individual performers but also as members of collaborative ensemble companies, this chapter examines the implications of this for how they might have approached the staging of plays in the playhouses for which these plays were (in part) conceived.² Playing in the early modern playhouse drew on and developed the flexible staging practices that had evolved through playing on a range of temporary stages and in a range of borrowed and appropriated locations: this chapter argues that, even after the emergence of the London playhouse, dramatic production continued to be, predominantly, a mode of performance in which players accommodated themselves and their plays to their places, audiences and moments of performance. In an attempt to open up an imaginative space for considering the nature of early modern ensemble approaches to dramatic performance, this chapter closes with an assessment of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (first performed around 1605 and conceived for performances in the original Globe playhouse and for a range of other sites and audiences) for what it reveals of its

² Pauline Kiernan argues that Shakespeare's medium was common playing, and that his poetic invocations he used (in part) to enable audiences to 'discover for [themselves] how much more appealing the "brazen world" of drama can be', *Shakespeare's Theory of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.160. The Renaissance dramatist as literary dramatist is discussed in Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.54-70, 151-74, and in Berger, Harry, Jr., *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

relationships with some of the contexts for which it was originally intended, and the practices through which its meanings were mediated.

4.2 PLAYING AS COMPLICITY AND INNOVATION

4.2.1 THE LOGICS OF ENSEMBLE PLAYING IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

Estimating that ‘an Alleyn or Burbage had to be able to deliver more than 4000 lines of verse, in 6 different plays through every week of his life while he worked in London’, Andrew Gurr argues that the chief difference between Shakespeare’s player and the modern actor lies in the quantity of lines the former had to learn (in a very short space of time).³ While not disputing this, an equally significant difference (to judge by the reactions of many of those modern actors who have played at Shakespeare’s Globe) is the fact that modern actors often suggest that their conventional training and theatre experience has not generally prepared them with the approaches necessary for performing both on large, outdoor and open platform stages, and with (as opposed to for) audiences who expect to be appealed to in the process of production.⁴ Bill Stewart (actor, 1997 Opening Season) notes that the visible and tangible presence of the audience ‘demanded a different style of working than in an ordinary theatre’.⁵ Ben Walden (actor, 1996 Prologue and 1997 Opening Season), describing the audience as ‘much more part of the play’ than is the case in more conventional theatre, points out that, at Shakespeare’s Globe, the relationship

³ Gurr, Andrew and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare’s Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.41.

⁴ Kiernan, Pauline, *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp.129-57. Rylance, Mark, Yolanda Vazquez and Paul Chahidi, “Discoveries from the Globe Space” in *Shakespeare’s Globe: a Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Carson, Christie and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.194-210. Bridget Escolme notes how a modern western actor’s training is conventionally rooted in the study of character in relation to text rather than the theatre or the audience, [Bridget Escolme, *Talking to the Audience: Shakespeare, Performance, Self* (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.13-4].

⁵ Kiernan, 1999, p.148.

between the stage and the audience is ‘much more give-and-take than in normal theatre which makes it certainly more exciting for the actor and, judging from when I’ve watched other plays, more exciting for the audience too’.⁶ Walden goes on to note ‘a big jump’ between the company’s (conventional) rehearsals and what actually happens ‘when you get on to the stage here’ – where the measure of a play’s success in performance is how well the space is being worked, in the moment, by the actor deliberately to engage an audience who are always ‘free to come and go as they wish’.⁷ Arguing ‘that anything that’s pre-planned is likely to get shaken around a lot once it’s taken on to the [Globe] stage’, Walden’s comments echo those of Matthew Scurfield (actor, 1996 and 1997 seasons) that ‘it’s very hard to impose a concept on a play here’, and that (in the context of a Globe performance) a play’s meanings are ultimately revealed through allowing the formal properties of the place to play a significant role in shaping the action:

What seems to be very obscure on the page to many of the actors, becomes clear if the text is approached in [a] more open way. With *Chaste Maid* [performed in the 1997 season] I think the Globe revealed this play [...] You see it revealed at the Globe – all the innuendo, the sexual references, what the text means. The building does it. Give the Globe a chance and let it reveal the play rather than thinking we control it.⁸

Of course, although the building provides the actors with possibilities, it actually does nothing unless the actors respond to these possibilities – it is the actors (not the building) who do the work, exploiting and manipulating the building for the opportunities it offers

⁶ Kiernan, 1999, p.149.

⁷ Kiernan, 1999, pp.149-50. Although the majority of a new Globe audience is seated, the freedom given to spectators Globe to leave is quite palpable – the only theatrical productions I have ever walked out of (and felt quite free to do so) were a Globe production of *Troilus and Cressida* in 2005 and a touring, outdoor, production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Peel Castle, the Isle of Man, in 2003. In both cases, whereas if I had been spectating in conventional, indoor, theatre spaces I would undoubtedly have stayed (at least until the interval), on these occasions I found it remarkably easy to walk out during performances which (to my mind uninspiring and un-engaging) had produced a space in which I felt I had no investment.

⁸ Kiernan, 1999, p.147.

and the dramatic spaces of performance they can produce through it. Paul Chahidi speaks of a quality of theatre revealed at Shakespeare's Globe in which 'the words of the playwright, the actor, the audience and the architecture of the building [are] all inextricably linked; you cannot separate one from the other'.⁹ The tactical disposition to performance that this requires (whereby the nature of the place and the quality of space demanded from it requires the actor to respond, in the moment, to the shifting currents and textures of performance and, specifically, in relation to the audience) is noted by a number of modern Globe actors (and directors). Yolanda Vazquez describes some of the differences between working in conventional theatres with 'extremely visual [directors] who like to have a very strong idea of how a production should look and should be played' and working as an actor in the Globe – 'where there was more freedom to say "What do I want? Where do I want to take this? How do I have to use this stage?"'.¹⁰ Paul Chahidi (Maria in Tim Carroll's 2002 *Twelfth Night*) amplifies this, suggesting that the production's move from a traverse stage in Middle Temple Hall to the exposed thrust of the Globe required more a shift in practices than a shift in what might be construed by the term 'staging':

At the Globe we got so used to moving and adjusting to each other, and at least half had worked there before, we found that it was really easy to adjust, because you trusted them, and you knew that they would adjust to you, so it would be very fluid. And the response is always slightly different from an audience each night.¹¹

⁹ Rylance, Mark, Yolanda Vazquez and Paul Chahidi, "Discoveries from the Globe Space" in *Shakespeare's Globe: a Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Carson, Christie and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp.194-210 (p.204).

¹⁰ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.200.

¹¹ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.207.

In fact, for this *Twelfth Night* Tim Carroll made a deliberate decision not 'to stage it', but to play with 'free movement' – encouraging a more instinctive and intuitive approach to movement and positioning that incorporated the audience into its dynamics:

We would settle on certain moves but [Carroll] never asked us to stay in one place. He gave enormous responsibility to the players [...] By the time of John Dove's *Measure for Measure* [...] we just knew that we could move and react to whatever the other did. We were really playing with the ball of the story in many different spontaneous ways [...] and it became wonderfully playful and it was a playful thing to go out and play with the other actors who had been in these plays for a while. We were creating with an audience, not recreating.¹²

William Russell (actor, 1997 Opening Season) describes the Globe as 'very much an actor's space. The actors feel relaxed in it. Just as the audience is liberated, so in the same way the actors are liberated. You feel a sense of freedom and excitement which I'm sure conveys itself to the audience and seems to come back to you, so you're double-charged all the time' – a perception shared by Paul Chahidi who also regards the Globe as 'definitely more of an actor's theatre than a director's'.¹³ What these (and other actors) suggest is that, rather than relying solely on the more strategically determined blocking decisions of conventional directorial approaches, the Globe seems to give them a freedom to work tactically – though the actors remain committed to the clear telling of the story of the play (what that story is being something that is worked out in rehearsal), yet they also remain alert and open to seizing the opportunities for heightening and shaping the audience's experience of, and sense of involvement in, the telling of that story.

¹² Rylance, Mark, "Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare's Globe" in Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp.102-14 (p.110).

¹³ Kiernan, 1999, p.133. Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.205.

Writing in 1997, a year after the opening of Shakespeare's Globe and two years into his tenure as its first Artistic Director, Mark Rylance speaks of his 'belief [...] that Shakespeare intended that meaning [...] be found in the imaginary space between audience and actor, hence the absolute necessity to explore the architecture that Shakespeare chose to define that space'.¹⁴ There is, of course, no evidence to suggest that the architectural arrangements of the original Globe were in any senses 'chosen' by Shakespeare – indeed, his inclusion as a shareholder in the original Globe was (according to Gurr) likely to have been 'a spur of the moment innovation [which] had little to do with the long-term interests of the company'.¹⁵ However, Rylance's early hunch that what was required for Globe performances was the production of a certain quality of space originating in the actors' uses of the place, is more emphatically expressed (and confirmed) in his comments 10 years later (in 2007) on the mistakenness of early rehearsal approaches focused on 'presenting an artefact to [the audience] for appreciation' – 'we needed to make interpretive choices, but the choices were only how to best serve the story, so that it could be played with the audience in one time, one space'.¹⁶ This 'one time, one space' is a quality of space, the product of actorly practices that require them not to address or present their characters to the audiences, but to 'speak *with* them, play *with* them' (italics original).¹⁷ Treating the audience as if they are 'another player on stage doing something' requires that the actors simultaneously respond to the audience and initiate moves designed to produce a reaction in them.¹⁸ As this demands a radically different approach

¹⁴ Rylance, Mark, "Playing the Globe: Artistic Policy and Practice" in Mulryne and Shewring, pp.169-76, (p.175).

¹⁵ Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.116.

¹⁶ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.106.

¹⁷ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.107.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

to performing (and not only of Shakespeare) to that encouraged by more conventional theatre practice, it also means a considerable degree of experimentation ('we had to make mistakes and explore') as it involves a way of working that both provokes the audience's imagination and sense of complicity yet makes effective theatrical and creative uses of the building.¹⁹ In language reminiscent of Brecht's 1926 plea for 'someone [to] take those buildings designed for theatrical purposes [...] and treat them as more or less empty spaces for the successful pursuit of sport', Rylance contrasts Globe rehearsals and performances with those of the Royal Shakespeare Company – characterising the latter as 'a bit like going to see a football match where the two teams had practiced an interpretation of the beautiful game [...] rather than actually playing the game' (with all the potential for instability and unpredictability that entails).²⁰

For Bill Stewart, the visible presence of the audience 'demanded a certain kind of style [...] a different style of working than in an ordinary theatre. You have to take the focus yourself, rather than the focus being given by the lights'.²¹ The importance of focus as a principal means not only of communicating the story but also of engaging and mediating the audience's perspective (and so operating also as an organisational device) is exemplified by Mark Rylance's approach, in which 'actors have to learn how to give and take focus, and find new ways of playing the essential situation of the story in this building'.²² Centred on producing and maintaining a dynamic relationship between the

¹⁹ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.109.

²⁰ Brecht, Bertolt, "Emphasis on Sport" in *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1974), pp.6-8 (p.6). Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.106.

²¹ Kiernan, 1999, p.148.

²² Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.108.

actors and the audience, for Rylance focus is one of the principal means through which this can be achieved and a production kept alive 'by changing it and making it spontaneous'.²³ Jem Wall (actor, 2002 Globe Season) describes how rehearsal exercises with Mike Alfreds for *The Golden Ass* developed the ensemble through ball-catching games which were also about learning to produce, pass and handle focus. Noting 'a strong parallel here [between the ball games and] how we relate to each other on stage', Wall puts this down to a matter of 'focus and making yourself available, it's about being there when you are required and getting out of the way when you are not'.²⁴ In terms of stage practices, this translated into developing in the actors an intuitive sense not only of passing, receiving and responding to lines, but also of being aware of the ensemble nature of this process – the role of each actor on stage in relation to mobile stage work that facilitated the clear passing and receiving of lines:

You have to make sure you are always available. You also need to be constantly aware of everything – your actions and movements, because they can either increase or decrease the focus from where it should be.²⁵

The practice, articulated by Wall, of producing focus identifies clearly the audience as central to its construction – it is their focus, deliberately produced not only to guide them through a spatially produced visual narrative of performance, but to make them feel involved in its production. Keith Dunphy (actor, 2002 Globe Season) distinguishes between

²³ *ibid.* Such rehearsal techniques and games are commonplace amongst theatre companies and directors aiming to produce an ensemble approach in their players. My own training in ensemble and chorus work with Complicite in 2001 involved a range of similar exercises – one of whose principal purposes was the development of a set of instinctive awarenesses and practices that, sensitive to balance and focus, enabled a company of actors to work collectively and responsively in the contexts of performance.

²⁴ Ryan, Jessica, *Shakespeare's Globe Research Bulletin: Interviews with Company Members from the 2002 Theatre Season* (London: Shakespeare's Globe Education, 2002b) p.7, accessed online at < <http://globe-education.org/discovery-space/resource-library/document/785/research-bulletin-actor-interviews-2002> > [17 June 2009].

²⁵ Ryan, 2002b, p.8.

the sort of focus achieved in a 'conventional black box theatre where [...] you know [the audience] are not going to interrupt the story' to that required by performing in the Globe space 'where the audience are so involved in the story that, as an actor, your focus has to be half on them also very much on what you are doing'.²⁶ Focus thus functions not only as a practice aimed at engaging an audience and communicating the action (its logic relating both to the stage space and the auditorium), it also functions as an organisational device – a means whereby actors take control of the audience and direct their attention. Patrick Lennox (actor, 2002 Globe Season) explains that in performance it was sometimes necessary to regain control of the audience, and that a principal means of doing so in the contexts of performance was to throw the focus out onto an individual spectator, making them the object of collective focus – a move that deflected attention away from the stage while, at the same time, enabling the actors to re-assert its dominance and authority.²⁷ When the actor then looked away from that spectator and into the audience more generally, the authority of the stage was intensified, its control regained and reasserted. Ralph Alan Cohen, in his advice for contemporary directors working at the Globe, recommends that actors use insult speeches to direct attention onto specific spectators – in effect, casting them as characters who are referred to in the lines, but who are not onstage. Though Cohen recommends this is a method for '[amusing] the audience and to enlarge the play' (extending the fictional world of the play into the off-stage world of the audience), Lennox makes clear a more tactical use of this for the actor – who can exploit the handling of focus in order to control and organise an increasingly restless or

²⁶ Ryan, 2002b, p.12.

²⁷ Ryan, 2002b, p.19.

provocative audience, and to reassert the dominance and authority of the stage in the production of the stage/audience dynamic.²⁸

Peter Shorey (Valentine in Carroll's *Twelfth Night*) speaks of his sense of 'duty' to keep focus on the Globe stage.²⁹ His awareness of what happens when focus is lost articulates an important aspect of the logic that underpins focus as a stage practice: when an actor moves inappropriately while looking out into the audience he not only fails to give focus but, in claiming an inappropriate focus for himself, he is seen and experienced by the audience as a distraction (rather than part of the overall stage action).³⁰ Relating the stage practice of focus to his work in stand-up comedy (where the solitary performer has to invite the audience into his world while, at the same time, he has 'to strongly control them') Lennox echoes Shorey's observations on the need to include what in conventional theatre would be regarded as distractions or interruptions, weaving these into the texture of performance in order to take control of it:³¹

There are times when there is an extremely noisy Chinook helicopter coming over, we might all break and look up because it just has to be brought into the story. It's not necessarily supposed to be funny, but you can't just stumble ahead if the audience focus has turned to that noise. To acknowledge that the focus has shifted elsewhere is the right thing to do – and if you do then they love that mutual acknowledgement [...] It's perilous to divorce yourself from outside stimulus. Once you've done that you can turn back to the play. Even if the noise doesn't cease, it becomes void once it has been accepted in that way. The audience will be looking to you as an actor and wondering how you will cope with the distraction. So you show clearly that you won't be distracted.³²

²⁸ Cohen, Ralph Alan, "Directing at the Globe and the Blackfriars: Six Big Rules for Contemporary Directors" in Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp.211-25 (p.230).

²⁹ Ryan, 2002b, p.23.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Ryan, 2002b, pp.19 &24.

³² Ryan, 2002b, p.19. See also Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp.38-40.

Lennox and Shorey point to the tactical nature of much in the actor's armoury of approaches to successful performing at the Globe. Their logics of practice include the ability to respond verbally, physically and spontaneously in unprepared and unrehearsed ways to other actors, to the audience, and to moments and interventions from outside the world of the play (even from those emanating from outside the theatre building itself) – and to make these elemental to the audience's experience of the production.

Claiming and mediating focus on stage produces and is produced by shifts in stage positionings, and the need constantly to realign the audience's gaze. These shifts help to produce focus, but they also include balance – since movement and changes in the actors' physical positionings require adjustments in the balance of the stage, and of the stage in relation to the audience. Tim Carroll not only encouraged the use of these logics in the performance of *Twelfth Night*, he also used them in rehearsal as a means of exploring the different performance possibilities for a scene – as a means of empowering the actors to discover and produce those possibilities. Carroll's rehearsal approach at these moments was not so much informed by his reading of the text and his subsequent need to find a way of staging his predetermined interpretation of it, but by a desire to find what interpretations of the scene were available in the first place (with a view to using them to clarify the story at a particular point in the play). Carroll began his rehearsal of Act 5 with a reminder to the actors that the space of the Globe stage

[Is like] a football pitch, where all the actors are players who pass the story like a ball. He also explained the importance of movement, as when an actor moves, attention is immediately drawn toward them. [Carroll] then experimented with running the scene several times, during each run making one character the particular focus of everyone. Taking up the action from 'o thou dissembling cub...',

[Michael Brown (*Viola*)] became the focus of attention. This was then transferred to [Mark Rylance (*Olivia*)]. This became an interesting exercise as different attitudes towards the two characters emerged.³³

Emerging from this process was not only a set of performance possibilities (for example, for Sir Andrew Aguecheek trying to appear tough in front of Olivia, or exaggerating the danger of his wound and so nuancing the quality of focus created by Sir Andrew, or as a means of exploring the range of responses to Malvolio's entrance), it also developed the actors as an ensemble – encouraging them to note the story Carroll wanted them to tell, but to do so through practices that kept them constantly engaged in a telling of it in which the actors were constantly alive to the possibilities of the moment and the need to be constantly responsive to each other: '[Carroll] urged the actors not to be afraid of giving obvious triggers to each other'.³⁴

Focus and balance are stage practices which encourage (and are encouraged by) ensemble approaches to performance. A company of actors who make a significant and collective contribution to the development of their own work (rather than relying principally, or even solely, on the guidance of a non-acting individual) rely on group stage practices such as those defined by focus and balance. Quoting Craig's assertion that 'Dance is the parent of theatre', Simon McBurney (who also aims for an ensemble approach from his actors) relates the close affinities between dance and ensemble-produced theatre to what is collectively '[felt] together at a particular moment'.³⁵ With a commitment to encouraging

³³ Ryan, Jessica, *Twelfth Night: Shakespeare's Globe Research Bulletin* (London: Shakespeare's Globe Education) 26 (July 2002a) pp.31-2, accessed online at <<http://globe-education.org/discovery-space/resourcelibrary/document/-782/research-bulletin-twelfth-night-2002>> [17 June 2009].

³⁴ Ryan, 2002a, p.32.

³⁵ Simon McBurney in *On Directing: Interviews with Directors*, ed. by Giannachi, Gabriella & Mary Luckhurst (London: Faber & Faber, 1999) p.70.

audience complicity (and so to the production of a ‘collective feeling’ that is not restricted to the actors, but one that is shared by both actors and spectators), McBurney’s approach is (like Carroll’s) one emanating from the disciplined uses of the actor’s body and voice in space:

When I direct I come from the viewpoint of an actor, and everything I do is linked to releasing the creativity of the actor. I want them to understand the form of what they are doing: if they’re acting in a play I want them to understand the themes. I want them to hold the piece in their hands; but that understanding is not an intellectual process, it is a physical one, they have to *feel* it.³⁶

Although McBurney’s role with Complicite involves giving direction, it is a direction from both within and without the ensemble. With an emphasis on collaborative process and unifying the ensemble ‘through [developing] a common language [...] a physical, vocal, musical and architectural language: all those elements which make up a theatre language’, McBurney describes his approach as one rooted in developing flexible and responsive actorly practices through which each work (production and performance) will find its own form and cohesion:

People talked of the choreography, but it wasn’t choreographed; instead, through innumerable improvisations the actors physically learned to shift together, like a flock of starlings. They learned to dip and wheel and found a fantastic pleasure in it.³⁷

In practice, what McBurney is speaking of here are those ensemble-based stage logics which hold the story together, but do so through a form that draws the audience into the dynamics of performance through the actors’ sensitivity to a performance space that is always defined and moulded by its relationships to the audience’s space. Invoking ‘the formal patterns of musical composition – rhythm, tempo and phrasing, for example – to

³⁶ Simon McBurney in Giannachi and Luckhurst, p.74.

³⁷ Simon McBurney in Giannachi and Luckhurst, pp.74-5.

help his actors structure material where the normal scaffolding of linear narrative and psychological motivation is absent' McBurney makes clear that 'at the heart of Complicite's work lies the challenge of transformation and, while this is self-evidently the very stuff of acting [...] in any genre of theatre, the range, form and dramaturgical purpose of such transformation within a Complicite production is markedly different from the conventional protocols of realistic representational acting'.³⁸ Central to this dramaturgical purpose is a playfulness in which the audiences sees 'both the actor and the character evidently enjoying the play of transformation' – it is not so much that the audience alone witnesses the actor's transformations, rather that the actor, as well as embodying the transformation, retains a detached and critical distance from it, enabling both him and the audience to witness it together.³⁹ It is the skilful, playful and imaginative work of the actor that holds a Complicite production together:

I constantly had to invent circumstances, games and environments where actors would see what they were doing, but still feel happy to spiral off creatively. I developed a whole language of transformation with them, a language which enabled them to control the imaginative leap from one medium to another.⁴⁰

Reviewing Complicite's 1992 production of *The Winter's Tale* (directed by Annabel Arden), Charles Spencer points to an important relationship between the physicality of the production and its meanings: 'Complicite's use of movement and body language brilliantly illuminates the text, and almost every scene has a vitality that forces you to consider the play afresh'.⁴¹ In a later review of the company's 2004 *Measure for Measure*, Spencer

³⁸ Murray and Keefe, pp.104-05.

³⁹ Murray and Keefe, p.106.

⁴⁰ Simon McBurney in Murray and Keefe, p.105.

⁴¹ Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph* (April 1992), accessed online at <<http://www.complicite.org/productions/review.html?id=27>> [18 June 2009]. The presumed relationship between production and text (the notion of production as an interpretation of a text) and the implications for performance and stage practices is discussed later in this chapter.

notes that ‘the company’s sense of ensemble is extraordinary, and the constant invention and merciless of precision of McBurney’s direction ensures concentration never flags during an interval-free two-and-a-quarter hours’.⁴² But the sense of an autocratic control of the action implied for McBurney’s direction by Spencer is far from the truth, for the ‘sense of ensemble’ Spencer discerns is one that has come about through a collaborative process which, though overseen by McBurney, has been shaped as much by the company as by himself – McBurney has definitely not imposed a mercilessly precise staging on the company. Each day of Complicite’s eight-week rehearsal period for their *Measure for Measure* began with exercises aimed at ‘exploring space, the language of movement, the development of an emotional language and the cohesion of an ensemble’.⁴³ These exercises were applied to Shakespeare’s text, and it was through this process (of exploring ‘bodies in space [...] place and mood’) that the story of the play and ways of delivering the lines emerged.⁴⁴ McBurney’s approach to Shakespeare’s play was no different, in many respects, to his approaches to other playtexts:

This type of work is at the very core of Complicite’s work, enabling collaboration and the development of both the actor’s individual sensitivity and a shared physical and emotional vocabulary within the company.⁴⁵

Although recognising (and clearly admiring) Complicite’s collective approach to theatre-making as ‘a style of physical theatre that is distinctly alien to the English tradition’, Peter Holland is unable (in his assessment of their 1992 *The Winter’s Tale*) to say anything about what that ‘style’ brought to the production – which is assessed not for its uniqueness as

⁴² Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph* (17 February 2006) accessed online at < <http://www.complicite.org/productions/review.html?id=90> > [17 June 2009].

⁴³ *Measure for Measure: Background Pack*, Complicite & the National Theatre, p.10, accessed online at <http://www.complicite.org/productions/Measure_for_Measure.pdf> [18 June 2009].

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

an ‘alien’ form of English Shakespeare (and what that says about what we might expect ‘English’ Shakespeare to be), but for the contributions of individual performances and their relationships to the production’s overall interpretation of the text.⁴⁶ Though Holland identifies some significant qualities in *Complicite*’s work (the physical nature of their approach and its distinctiveness), his failure to deal with these (and his readiness to fall back into a conventional interpretive mode that says nothing about the spaces produced by this production and everything about the actors’ delivery of their lines) might be construed as a consequence of a larger and deeply rooted tendency (in academic and literary studies) to view the stage (reductively) as merely part of an overall representation of the text (whose most important elements are the individual contributions of the principal actors). Though Holland reviews the production more expansively in *Shakespeare Survey*, his account still focuses on stage images (and the contributions of stage action to their construction), and how these relate to the production’s interpretation of the text – rather than how its ‘rapidly switching moods’ were spatially achieved and experienced.⁴⁷

Space is bound up in social practice, and is neither a neutral medium nor an inert container, rather it is ‘a socially produced set of manifolds’ – and what Holland’s

⁴⁶ Holland, Peter, *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English stage in the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp.123-26.

⁴⁷ Holland, Peter, “Shakespeare Performances in England, 1992” in *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1994) 159-89 (170). Holland is, of course, part of a longstanding and respected tradition of theatre criticism that takes a predominantly literary approach to the evaluation of theatrical performance. But theatre criticism does not necessarily need either to be rooted in a literary reading of the stage, nor does it need to privilege the intellectual perspectives of the single spectator. Dorothy Max Prior (editor of *Total Theatre* magazine) has encouraged alternative approaches to reviewing – such as three-way reviewing, which is undertaken by two different spectators sitting in two different parts of the auditorium and one cast member, each writes a response to the same performance, they then work collectively to bring their responses together in a single form. Another approach Max has encouraged has been the single reviewer following a touring production as it plays in a number of different locations, the reviewer then submitting an overall impression of the production as it was experienced at different points in its life, in different venues and before different audiences [private conversations and exchanges of emails between the author and Max, 2005].

identification of Complicite's significances and subsequent failure to deal with these does pinpoint the problematics of an interpretive mode that sees (and privileges) place, but which is blind to the role of space in the shaping of experience and communication of meaning.⁴⁸ Holland's descriptions of individual performances and items of costume is part of a critique that locates performance in space (rather than being productive of it). Like approaches that define theatrical space through its topography or organization, space is transformed into a representation, a conceptualised space of signs and objectification – which is likely to have very little to do with how it is used or experienced, or how it relates to the practices of the actors and spectators who animate it and make it breathe. It is little wonder then that Holland regards Complicite's *The Winter's Tale* so categorically as 'a production [belonging] in medium-sized theatres. Its ambitions would never have survived the unyielding scrutiny to which a large house [...] subjects all work'.⁴⁹

The flexible, ensemble-based stage practices that are fundamental to the work of companies such as Complicite and those that work at Shakespeare's Globe (with their emphasis on productive space and the role of the actor in the production of that space) articulate logics that stand largely outside conventional theatrical discourses on the performance of early modern drama. Yet the production work of these companies reveals space to be not only a significant factor in the shaping of a performance's meanings, but as perhaps *the* most significant factor in that. Holland relates Complicite's *The Winter's Tale* with a specific type of theatre building, but this production toured and was played successfully in numerous venues and in a range of locations – nationally and abroad (in

⁴⁸ Crang, Mike & Thrift, N., (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000) p.3.

⁴⁹ Holland, 1997, p.126.

Australia and Hong Kong). Adapting to the formal properties of each of its places and environments meant not restaging the play but, instead, allowing the actors to deploy the common language developed in rehearsals and consolidated through previous performances – responding to the place of performance through creative and flexible practices to produce unique, experiential spaces of performance. When Tim Carroll's *Twelfth Night* transferred from Middle Temple Hall to Shakespeare's Globe in 2002, it needed to accommodate itself to a different stage/audience configuration (going from a traverse to a thrust stage arrangement), but Paul Chahidi regarded it as no more than an adjustment: 'I do not feel it has to be a huge difference to go from the Middle Temple Hall to the Globe'.⁵⁰ Aware of how a touring production changes from performance to performance (accommodating itself to the demands of different audiences and new sites of performance) Michael Bogdanov's criticisms of those who review (and fix their responses to a play early on in its run) are a reminder of those contingencies and instabilities of performance (the mechanisms by which a single production changes and mutates over time) that are obscured by a critical tendency to privilege the single performance and to assume it to be representative of the whole:

"A funny thing has happened on the way from Stratford to London" has written a certain *Guardian* critic on many an occasion. Nothing funny has happened at all. A show has merely played some eighty performances since the first night and is a different production.⁵¹

Mike Alfreds writes that 'most actors have an innate instinct about moving around on stage and quickly acquire a fluency', and he refines the idea of focus as a point of

⁵⁰ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.207.

⁵¹ Bogdanov, Michael and Michael Pennington, *The English Shakespeare Company: The Story of "The Wars of the Roses" 1986-1989* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990) p.59. The critic in question is not named, but Bogdanov leaves little room for doubt that it is Michael Billington.

concentration (PoC) which all the actors are sensitive to and which can be varied from performance to performance, location to location.⁵² A PoC can be as much to do with how the space is used by the actors (their uses of heights, levels, corners, the periphery of the acting area, curves, diagonals, depth, etc.) as it can be about how they respond to a particular character, movement, prop, piece of furniture, etc.⁵³ Noting how touring productions (especially) need to be kept alive by actors' alertness and responses to the demands of the place of performance, Alfreds describes how a company can, by shifting the PoC from one performance to another, take a playful and unprepared approach to their work – through which can be 'discovered more and more nuances and ideas in the material, more aspects to relationships, more shape to situations'.⁵⁴ What this approach provides the actors with is a tactical disposition that enables them to appropriate their audiences and places of performance, whilst at the same time finding (and producing) something fresh in the production itself:

We toured to Lincolnshire during a bleak January week of heavy snow. One evening, we arrived at the school where we were due to perform, only to discover that not just the snow but also a local election had left us with an audience of nine [...] I had foreseen having to sit dutifully through a heavy-going night; after all, a lively comedy needs more than an audience of nine. All I know is that I had one of the best times I've ever spent in 'theatre'. In that dark and shabby classroom, with the audience seated on school chairs in a single row right in front of them, the actors were [...] released, [...] witty, brave, surprising, inventive and generous [...] Between them, audience and actors created an evening of intense joyfulness.⁵⁵

A high profile director like Peter Brook, when touring his own productions, is allowed radically to alter a venue's auditorium so that the building itself helps produce the sort of theatrical experience he is after. When *Le Costume* was performed in 2001 on the Quarry

⁵² Alfreds, Mike, *Different Every Night: Freeing the Actor* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2007) p.261.

⁵³ Alfreds, pp.261-64.

⁵⁴ Alfreds, p.298.

⁵⁵ Alfreds, pp.299-300.

stage at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, Brook had the top rows of seating (about a third of the total) draped off and the front rows extended into the stage area – taking the audience into the performance space and surrounding it on three sides. The impersonal, steeply raked and confrontational quality of the Quarry stage/auditorium was immediately transfigured into something much more personal and intimate – giving Brook’s familiar (bright orange) carpet in the centre of the stage a more domestic quality than would have been the case had the auditorium been left unchanged. However, most touring productions (including Carroll’s *Twelfth Night*) are denied this privilege, and are required to ‘harness the place to the play’ – but a positive consequence of this is that it enables these companies ‘to build up through experience an understanding of how the architecture of the house aids or thwarts the actor-audience relationship’.⁵⁶

When Northern Broadsides (predominantly a touring company) performed *The Comedy of Errors* in 2005 at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, (again, on the Quarry stage), they did so in a pool of space isolated from the 750 spectators towering over them (the auditorium is arranged in the manner of a Greek amphitheatre, with almost all of the audience above the actors’ sightlines). Ian Appleton, one of the architects involved in the design and development of the West Yorkshire Playhouse, speaks of the Quarry’s steep rake offering ‘a cohesion of the audience, good sightlines and above all the performers’ command of the audience’.⁵⁷ Certainly, it produces a performance space of particular intensity – with the audience’s gaze controlled (even fixed) by the arrangement, such that

⁵⁶ Mackintosh, Ian, *Architecture, Actor & Audience* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993) p.127.

⁵⁷ Burnett, Kate & Peter Ruthven Hall, *Make Space! Design for Theatre and Alternative Spaces* (London: The Society of British Theatre Designers, 1994) p.30.

the large acting area is both highly charged and the only possible point of focus. The production used a limited set of four painted panels, distributed across the upstage area, and three model buildings (each lit from within) dotted around the floor in the downstage area. This provided a lot of empty space for the actors to work in and exploit – a significant factor, as movement was a principal means through which their highly physicalised characters and the quality of their relationships and interactions were revealed. The Dromios shared a quite specific gait and bearing – a stooping, simian body that immediately seemed to turn them into figures of fun for the audience. When Dromio of Ephesus first entered in 1.2, his response to Antipholus's 'Here comes the almanac of my true date: What now? How chance thou art returned so soon?' (1.2.41-2) was to stop, look back (as if Antipholus was speaking to someone else), look to the audience (as if asking them to explain Antipholus's curious remark) then (cautiously) continue his journey across the stage – at which point, blocked by Antipholus, he stopped and responded, quizzically, with 'Return'd so soon?' (1.2.43) (giving Antipholus time, and space, in which to explain his question). But the audience had started laughing and were engaged by this Dromio from the moment he first appeared on stage – the actor's uses of the stage and his interactions with the building heightening the pleasure he gave. His first appearance had claimed focus, which was mediated by Antipholus's bemused response to his unexpected arrival. Dromio's playful uses of that focus (his looking offstage, then into the audience, then back to the path he was taking) were ways of appropriating the place of performance and harnessing it to the needs of the play. The sheer scale of the Quarry theatre (the significant physical distance between stage and auditorium) heightened Dromio's performance, as the distance he had to travel to arrive downstage to where

Antipholus was given the actor ample opportunity to physicalise his character – enabling him to engage the audience, enabling them to enjoy following his journey across the stage.⁵⁸

By contrast, when the same ensemble played *The Comedy of Errors* 6 weeks later on the much smaller and more intimate thrust stage of the Georgian Theatre, Richmond, Dromio's first entrance did not engender the same audience reaction as it did in Leeds. Dromio, when he first appeared, was physically much closer to the audience than he was in Leeds, and the smallness of the Georgian stage gave the actor very little space to walk into and exploit for its potential to help him physicalise his character. Here there was no audience laughter at his first entrance, instead it came after Dromio had arrived downstage and, in response to the possibilities provided by this unique building, leant against one of the onstage boxes and started flirting with one of its female occupants (at the same time taking an undue interest in the contents of her handbag). It was this, and Antipholus's surprise and subsequent agitation at Dromio's failure to acknowledge him, that initiated the audience's laughter – a laughter which then developed not through Dromio's simian walk and confusion (his physicalising of the space and appeals to the audience), but by his sheer delight in finding a young woman to flirt with and, potentially, cozen (and the audience's delight at seeing him so oblivious to Antipholus). The same moment, staged a month later at the Stephen Joseph Theatre-in-the-Round, Scarborough, produced another set of responses altogether. Here it was Antipholus who provoked more

⁵⁸ Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* was performed by Northern Broadsides (directed by Barry Rutter) at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, on Tuesday 22 March 2005; at the Georgian Theatre, Richmond, on Saturday 6 May 2005; and at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, on Thursday 9 June 2005.

humour than Dromio: whereas at the Georgian Theatre it was clearly Dromio who had the upper hand (and was the humorous point of focus for the audience), at Scarborough, Dromio (isolated in the middle of the stage area) was more of a victim of a comic and ridiculous Antipholus – whose agitated (and ridiculous) walking around the edge of the round claimed the audience's focus and denied Dromio both focus and attention (it requiring a physical act on the audience's part to follow Antipholus, as they had to turn their heads to follow him).

Each of these venues offered a different set of possibilities for the same set of actors involved in the production – yet not one of the locations was able fully to contain or exhaust the production's potential for engaging an audience and telling a story. On each occasion, the actors exploited the formal properties of place in order to produce unique but ephemeral spaces of dramatic performance – each one the product of tactical responses to the logics of place. The production was not limited by its locations, but revealed through them. Although this was a single production, its precise nature and quality (and the meanings generated) varied from location to location – as the actors deployed their flexible logics of practice to take, give and mediate focus, to engage and disengage an audience (often exploiting its heterogeneity), and to do so for a range of comic and other effects. What sort of building such a production 'belongs to' depends on where it is seen – for this was a production (like Complicite's *The Winter's Tale*) that varied from performance to performance, a major part of its success being founded on actors' abilities to 'harness the place to the play' to produce moments of space that maximised the play's dramatic effect (and the audience's pleasure).

4.2.2 DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES

As explained in chapter 2, in the performance of early modern drama it was actors' uses of the *locus* and *platea* that produced not only the dynamic interplay between two different types of spaces, but also the particular quality of the stage and the fluidity of early modern theatrical production. De Certeau notes how positivist analyses of social and cultural practice avoid the peculiar and the individual, explaining them away as aberrations or as representations of other groups.⁵⁹ Limited by their tendency to privilege production over use, similar approaches to early modern theatrical performance assert a primacy for language over practice. Authorised and orthodox knowledge of theatre is derived from our tendency to reduce it to the stability of those meanings facilitated by language – the production of which is possible because we have come to view theatre as, primarily, a mode of production whose meanings are predicated on our practice of consuming, rather than using, the products of the stage. Simon Murray and John Keefe, insisting that all theatre is physical, attempt to recover a language for the 'plurality of theatre practice-theory-history [...] rooted in [...] embodied ideas that are in a dialectical relationship to the spoken word'.⁶⁰ W. B. Worthen similarly identifies the 'text/performance dichotomy' as the consequence of a failure on the part of performance criticism generally 'to relate the signification of the dramatic text to the practices of performance' – and argues the need 'to locate the space and practice of criticism in relation to the practices of performance'.⁶¹ Because the privileging of production encourages the privileging of language, what we can say and write about both the modern and the early modern theatrical event becomes the

⁵⁹ De Certeau, p.v.

⁶⁰ Murray and Keefe, p.3.

⁶¹ Worthen, W. B., *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.152.

inevitable end-product of our experiences – and there remains some suspicion of those more indeterminate forms of knowledge derived from other, non-discursive and practice-based sources. Yet this chapter has shown how a number of ensemble companies have worked successfully to stage Shakespeare for contemporary audiences through the deployment of non-conventional stage practices that often lie outside the realms of formalised and predetermined stagings and the discourses that sustain them. Operating at a more tactical level, the rehearsal and production activity described above demonstrates how ensemble performances seize the opportunities provided by buildings and audiences in the service of producing engaging and coherent performances of Shakespeare.

Peter Holland has little to say about both his experiences of Complicite's *The Winter's Tale* and the practices of the actors that helped shape them ('physicality is relegated to a mere supporting role to the word [...] a means to an end [...] the vehicle by which words are delivered or moved around the stage; or reduced to the routine gestures and mannerisms sufficient to convey the stock character inhabiting and making familiar the world of the play').⁶² Preferring a more visual (and detached) vocabulary, his account is, in effect, typical of much writing and reviewing that comes after the actual experience of theatre in practice: the translation of visceral experience into a representation, the product of a critical approach that reads back into the performance and over-lays an organised and categorical reflection on it, rather than a critical approach that seeks to account for the primordial experience of it. But 'the presence and circulation of a representation [...] tells us nothing about what it is for its users'; the ensemble performances this chapter has

⁶² *ibid.*

described, in their moments of production, took particular account of their audiences – noting the ways by which the relationship between the two is achieved enables us to discern not only those logics of practice at work which produce that relationship but also ‘the secondary level of production hidden in the process of its utilization’.⁶³

Not just modern Globe performances, but also performances of early modern plays by companies such as Complicite and Northern Broadsides, demonstrate theatre’s capacity not just for telling a story, communicating themes and ideas or interpreting the text (which are generally regarded as theatre’s primary purpose or ‘level of production’) but also to produce cohesion, complicity, relationship, pleasure and a whole host of other experiences that lie outside of many contemporary discursive and critical approaches to the work of Shakespeare in performance (and the nature of theatre more generally). The stage logics of the above companies articulate their actors’ abilities to transgress the rules of place, exploiting this propensity to produce spaces experienced by the audience as cohesive, complicit, relational, pleasurable etc. This ‘secondary level of production’ is an important element, intrinsic to the quality and nature of these companies’ work – and is only ‘secondary’ in the sense that it is, for cultural and ideological reasons, not the level of production that is conventionally foregrounded and privileged in theatrical production and the discourses that sustain it. ‘Audience and the acknowledgement of audience are fundamental to me: there has to be that thread of companionship’ (McBurney) echoes Brecht’s dictum that ‘theatre that makes no contact with the audience is a nonsense’.⁶⁴

The productions and practitioners discussed in this chapter all aim, in their various ways,

⁶³ De Certeau, p.xiii.

⁶⁴ Simon McBurney in Giannachi and Luckhurst, p.73. Brecht, p.7.

to produce a sense of complicity rooted in Lecoq's notion of 'play [as] a quality he was seeking in his students, not only in their relationship to the spoken text and actual stage objects, but also in the dynamic between themselves and with their audiences'.⁶⁵ Lecoq asserts not only that 'play is an embodied disposition as well as a cognitive one' but that complicity is resistant to the mechanisms and operations of discursive logics – for it 'cannot be drilled and learned through counting [it] emerges through deep listening, looking, touching, smelling, sensing, thinking, feeling, repetition, pleasure, *bordeom*'.⁶⁶ Just as 'an authentic and profound sense of ensemble cannot be achieved without complicité between participants', the conditions for its production cannot exist without actors disposed towards a mode of playfulness that engenders *disponibilité* – 'a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive [...] the route to [which] is through the body and movement'.⁶⁷

Brecht's re-evaluation of the past included a re-examination of the plays of Shakespeare and the forms of theatre through which they had been historically presented.⁶⁸ Claiming that modern theatre failed to distinguish between representation and the means of representation (it was too reliant on, and productive of, empathy) Brecht argued that, when it came to the performance of Shakespeare, the audience is denied those points of contact and sources of pleasure available to earlier audiences: 'we are left safely dependent on beauty of language, on elegance of narration, on passages which stimulate

⁶⁵ Murray and Keefe, p.146.

⁶⁶ Murray and Keefe, p.147.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Brecht, pp.182 &196-97.

our private imaginations: in short, on the incidentals of the old works'.⁶⁹ Brecht's approaches to developing his Berliner Ensemble as an ensemble included encouraging them to learn from the past in order to break free from the restrictions of many of its staging practices, but the overall aim of this was to liberate the actor to explore to the fullest the uses to which the stage could be put.⁷⁰ It was Manfred Wekwerth who, following Brecht's death in 1956, was first to explore Brecht's ideas in practice in relation to Shakespeare – one result of which was the production of *Richard III* discussed in chapter 2, with its (then) novel uses of the stage and theatre building in the service of an intricate stage/auditorium dynamic aiming to incite complex pleasures in its audiences.⁷¹ The role of pleasure was central to Brecht's (and Wekwerth's) approach to developing a critical attitude in the spectators. *Verfremdungseffekt* here meant approaching Shakespeare in order to rediscover those points of contact between the stage and the audience that conventional approaches (with their focus on great actors, individual characters and the production of empathy) had obscured.⁷² The combination of pleasure and philosophical insight that Brecht saw in Shakespeare lay at the heart of what he described as 'philosophical folk theatre' – theatre that exposes contradictions, incites speculation and response, and makes that an enjoyable (and collaborative) activity.⁷³

⁶⁹ Brecht, p.183.

⁷⁰ Brecht, p.197.

⁷¹ Brecht, in his *Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948), distinguishes between the 'simple pleasures' provoked by conventional theatre practices (with its focus on merely entertaining and satisfying a largely passive audience) and the 'complex pleasures [of] great drama [which] are more intricate, richer in communication, more contradictory and more productive of results', [Brecht, p.181].

⁷² Manfred Wekwerth and Robert Weimann, "Brecht and Beyond" in *Redefining Shakespeare: Literary Theory and Theater Practice in the German Democratic Republic* ed. by Guntner, J. Lawrence & Andrew M. McLean (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp.226-40 (p.229).

⁷³ Wekwerth and Weimann, pp.230-31.

Giving pleasure (in its various forms) is equally central to the aims of the companies discussed above; and it may be that, in many respects, it constitutes as much a 'primary level of production' in their work as does the communication of themes and ideas. The giving of pleasure is thus not of secondary significance, but is a principal means through which themes and ideas are revealed and made tangible to an audience – as is implied by those comments (above) by Globe actors in relation to their handling of interruptions and other events extraneous to the production in hand. Flexible staging practices that acknowledge and respond to the broader world of which a performance is part include the audience in the construction of the performance's dynamics and in its production of space by weaving into the performance those accidents, intrusions and mistakes that, in conventional theatre would disrupt the flow.⁷⁴ Rather than providing opportunities for relieving tension or producing light or comic relief, these become the very means by which an audience's engagement and investment in the production, their appreciation of its various significances, are intensified:

When something supposedly 'goes wrong' in the performance, far from ruining the atmosphere it makes the whole experience so much more intense. I remember in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* (1991) two giant tables fell over and the whole cast rallied round to reposition them. The audience knew that we were improvising but they didn't stop their suspension of disbelief. On another occasion Kathryn Hunter fainted and we stopped the show for ten minutes while she recovered. I then retold the story to the audience in one and a half minutes. The electricity in the audience in both these instances was much greater and the audience attention was heightened. The sense of the present became palpable and the audience were made much more aware that anything might go wrong or change at any given moment. On these occasions the applause we received had quite a different quality to it than is usual: the audience realized that they had a complicit participation in a creative act.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp.38-40.

⁷⁵ Simon McBurney in Giannachi and Luckhurst p.73.

A secondary level of production is also at work in conventional theatrical discourses, which is to do not just with the production of a certain knowledge (of theatre, of Shakespeare), but also the sense of privilege and authority with which that knowledge is invested – a privilege and authority that reinforces and is shared by the modes of theatre such knowledge defines and sustains. This chapter points to something of what is lost when we rely too heavily on those privileged discourses (and the critical practices that they sustain), and when we deny legitimacy and authority to other discourses more closely associated with originating practices and primordial experiences (rather than visual and semiotic readings). Partly, this is a problem of language; for those wishing to write about the flexible stage logics and practices of ensemble-based productions of Shakespeare do not have access to the same breadth and pin-point accuracy of language that has accumulated around more conventionalised approaches. De Certeau notes that one of the consequences of foregrounding practices previously obscure, is that they accrue a language to themselves – enabling the apparatus or system of which they are part to be incorporated into the discursive system of control and categorisation through which they were transformed.⁷⁶ Our contemporary language of the stage has developed largely in response to theatre's transformation into 'the organising principle of a technology of power' – which has its origins in the emergence of the first permanent and purpose-built playhouses in early modern London, and the subsequent development of theatre as a largely settled and institutionalised practice.⁷⁷ Designed to account for and explain the strategies of theatre (as opposed, for example, to the tactics of players and spectators), the language of conventional theatrical discourse is ill-equipped to respond to

⁷⁶ De Certeau, pp.48-9.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

practices that operate outside of (or are resistant to) the formal logics of the stage that that language has developed to explain, authorise and privilege. Erika Lin, and Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa note the inappropriateness of modern conventional stage geographies (with their focus on fixed locations – ‘front’, ‘upstage’, ‘downstage’, etc.) when applied to early modern dramatic performances. Yet the very particularised knowledges of the stage this language authorises is sustained by Lin’s reiteration of Weimann’s association of the *locus* with ‘the area that was most distant from the audience’ the *platea* with that “‘platform-like acting area” closest to the audience’, Gurr and Ichikawa, in their association between the relative statuses of characters and their stage ‘positioning’ and ‘location’.⁷⁸

Gurr and Ichikawa interpret the bareness of the early modern playhouse’s platform stage as one of emptiness, rather than as one of highly charged possibilities (especially for an audience watching a company of actors whose theatricality they knew well, and which they knew as one mediated through the constantly inventive and creative uses made by players of the stage):

It was simply a space for walking over, whether it was meant to depict an indoor scene or one out of doors. With very few exceptions its scenes were fixed by word-painting rather than scene-painting.⁷⁹

The audience’s horizon of expectations and the nature of space as something produced in the moment of its use make these assertions highly problematic. The platform stage may well have lacked the illusionistic scenery available to the modern stage, but it was not left

⁷⁸ Lin, Erika T., “Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann’ Concepts of *Locus* and *Platea*” in *New Theatre Quarterly* 22:3 (2003), 283-298 (p.284). Gurr and Ichikawa, pp.11-2.

⁷⁹ Gurr and Ichikawa, p.62.

solely to language to convey environment and contexts – actors too, through movement and uses of the stage, were (and still are) able to suggest environments and contexts physically, either by embodying them or else inscribing within their performances their interactions with and responses to their environments and contexts (thereby helping to produce these in their audience's imagination). Oberon's invisibility to the lovers in the woods is a clear example of this, whereby his 'But who comes here? I am invisible; and will overhear their conference. *Enter Demetrius. Helena following him*' (2.1.186-87) advertises his invisibility for the audience only, and ensures that 'any responses that [they] see in him come from his reactions to the tragic-comic dialogue, the lovers' actions, and from any appropriate physical-visual improvisation'.⁸⁰ For the actor (denied either a real or a represented forest in which to work) Oberon's invisibility needs to be performed – thus his movements, his uses of the stage (not just in relation to the lovers but also in relation to an audience for whom Oberon's invisibility is being so visibly produced) are going to be central to a production of space experienced by the audience as dynamic and highly textured: 'A "simple" statement sets up the physical conditions of invisibility in which no bushes or trees are needed, only the audience's imagination accepting the character's physical state as we watch the *actant* create this'.⁸¹ Not just invisibility, but also night-time (the Gadshill robbery in *1 Henry 4*, the opening scenes of *Othello*), solitude (*Hamlet*), ship-board in the middle of a storm (*The Tempest*), and numerous other contexts and environments, would have been produced principally through the actors' uses (through movement) of the stage – their ability to transform the bare boards of the stage into convincing, contextualised and nuanced dramatic spaces. When creating night for the

⁸⁰ Murray and Keefe, p.174.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

scenes immediately before the battle at Agincourt in the Globe's 1997 *Henry V*, it was decided not to use props such as lanterns rather 'the English soldiers wrapped blankets round their tired, aching bodies and looked toward the rising light on the "horizon" to compel the audience's belief in the turning of night into dawn'.⁸²

Arguing that 'diagonal blocking, using the depth as well as the breadth of the stage makes for effective staging' in the new Globe theatre, Pauline Kiernan says little about how this depth/breadth is actually used by the actors, rather she demonstrates how specific stage locations seem to function in performance as 'hot spots' or strong points – especially potent and fixed places that allow actors variously to exploit the potentials they provide for stage/audience interaction and for establishing an authority for their characters.⁸³ However, her use here of the term 'blocking' (in a section headed *Blocking and 3-D Acting*) is highly problematic for the images and ideas it invokes in relation both to the modern actor's work on the new Globe stage and what this might reveal about the work of the early modern player on similar stages. Although acknowledging that 'almost continual movement is required in this space, with long speeches delivered by static actors to be avoided', Kiernan goes on to say nothing about the movement which the modern Globe actors (including Tim Carroll's) found so indispensable.⁸⁴ What her descriptions of Globe rehearsals and stagings largely focus on are the fixed, geographical points of reference on the platform stage itself – rather than the practices through which those points came to acquire and produce their significances within a more dynamic dramaturgical texture. In

⁸² Kiernan, 1999, p.73.

⁸³ Kiernan, 1999, p.63.

⁸⁴ Kiernan, 1999, pp.63-6.

this she is helped by vocabulary that comes ready-made to define fixed points, specific areas and lines on the stage, and by a grammar that reflects a critical and discursive tradition disposed towards seeing space in organisational and categorical (rather than qualitative and experiential) terms.

The Oxford English Dictionary records the first instance of 'blocking' in its theatrical sense (to describe the plan or planning of the action of a play) in America in 1961 (its first recorded theatrical use in Britain was 1967).⁸⁵ It is difficult to trace the etymology of this meaning with any exactness, but the evidence suggests that it originated in the US and may well derive from its use in American Football (where, since the end of the 19th century 'blocking' has been used to describe a team's attempts to obstruct their opponents – relating it to the strategic planning that goes on before the start of a match). There are two instances of 'to block' (meaning to sketch out or plan) from Britain dating from before that: one in James VI of Scotland's 1585 *The essayes of a prentise, in the divine art of poesie*, the other by Sir Thomas Urquart, but there are no further recorded instance of this usage until the mid-18th century – and no recorded instances of its use in relation to theatre practice before 1961. Kiernan's use of the term is part of a modern critical perspective that seeks to account for production rather than use – faithfully recording the fixed nodal points of performance (those elements which can be mapped out and so reproduced) rather than the uses (primary and secondary) to which they are put (by both actors and spectators).

⁸⁵ Oxford English Dictionary online at <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50023733?query_type=word&queryword=blocking&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=2> [11 June 2009].

‘Blocking’ is an inadequate description of the rehearsal approaches deployed by the ensemble companies described above. Though Liam Brennan (actor, 2002 Season) reflects on the relative strengths and significances of various stage locations and how they were appropriated through rehearsal (the pillars, for example, being ‘negotiated’ by the actors rather than incorporated into a process of blocking), he also makes it clear that rehearsals were fluid, based on movement rather than the fixing of physical positions (i.e. ‘blocked’) – ‘[allowing] the actor a lot of freedom’.⁸⁶ Patrick Lennox (actor, 2002 Season), similarly, notes how, for Mike Alfred’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the actors had the hot spots pointed out to them – but ‘it’s purely technical [...] When the mechanicals were working on ensemble, we were given a note that we should gather in a bunch. That type of grouping is a nightmare on a conventional stage, but here it is totally different because there are people on three sides. You can give yourself any number of variations on that “bunch”’.⁸⁷ Elsewhere, Lennox is more explicit about Mike Alfred’s flexible approaches to the staging of the play:

Mike likes the production to evolve continuously throughout the run, and nothing is blocked. As long as we keep strictly to the script and each ‘intention’ then we can be free with the subtleties. Those of us that played the mechanicals all grasped that very quickly, and felt very comfortable working that way. Of course, some performances threw up choices that were quite clearly wrong, but once you’ve committed to something you must go with it despite that knowledge. The next time you perform you just don’t choose it. It’s a sort of Darwinian process of elimination.⁸⁸

Keith Dunphy (actor, 2002 season) links Alfred’s refusal to block the play with his desire for a performance that is constantly in the hands of the actors:

⁸⁶ Ryan, p.16.

⁸⁷ Ryan, 2002b, p.20.

⁸⁸ Ryan, 2002b, p.18. This company worked together at Shakespeare’s Globe for the 2002 season only, Shakespeare’s company (as this chapter goes on to explain) worked together over many years. In the case of their London performances, their allegiances to particular playhouses enabled them to exploit their familiarity with a particular building’s architectural configuration.

There was no blocking at all within this play (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Mike [Alfreds] does not block. It is all about actions and objectives and your wants in a scene. Mike believes that if you have those instilled in you then the blocking will emerge from this. I suppose a traditional directorial approach would be to block an entire play. Mike's approach can occasionally make it difficult for us as actors – some nights if you are tired [...] then things can go slightly wrong because you don't have any blocking to fall back on. You can't get staid so it is essential to be on the ball at all times with Mike's work. Having said that, I would also say this is a really positive element of Mike's approach – you really have to step up to each performance, keeping it fresh all the time.⁸⁹

Blocking implies an approach centred on stasis and stage positioning rather than movement and stage action – a means of mapping the stage, of overlaying it with a predetermined and conceptualised model based on how it is to be read (rather than encountered or experienced).⁹⁰ Whatever else it does, in an open-air, public playhouse, in which audience collaboration is essential, it limits the possibilities for that collaboration by setting the bounds of the actor's performance. Leaving little room for tactical, playful responses by the actors to the opportunities provided by individual audiences and localised conditions and contexts, blocking indicates an approach contrary to those adopted by the successful ensemble performances of Shakespeare described here. Introducing his new company for the first time to the Globe stage in 2002, Mark Rylance presented them not with a groundplan and a set of clearly marked stage positions with a description of their qualities, but with a 'flow diagram [...] of the best ways to move within a theatre in the round. You do things in curves and you move in circles'.⁹¹ With no

⁸⁹ Ryan, 2002b, p.12.

⁹⁰ P.A. Skantze reminds us not only that 'the state of performance is motion, even if the motion consists solely of the actor's respiration' but that this happens in the context of a 'theatrical exchange' between bodies on stage and those off stage in the audience, *Stillness in Motion in the Seventeenth Century Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) p.3.

⁹¹ Ryan, 2002b, p.22.

mention of the word 'blocking', his basic advice to the actors was not where to stand, but 'just to keep moving'.⁹²

Training for the early modern common player was acquired largely on the job through experience, and was geared not so much towards the actor identifying his own with the character's objectives ('character [as] the means to the actor's self-discovery'), but rather on the needs of the role in relation to the broader stage texture of which it was part – and the relationship between that and an heterogeneous audience.⁹³ The early modern player's experience was of playing and spectating in a wide range of (largely) borrowed sites that required him, no matter how strategic (i.e. planned) his company's approach to a play, constantly to work tactically in order to exploit the specific contexts of performance for maximum dramatic advantage. Tiffany Stern notes that, when time allowed, 'instruction' was given to an individual player either by a more experienced player or by the playwright, but this amounted to no more than instruction in speech (i.e. delivery of the lines) and 'action' (supporting gestures).⁹⁴ In terms of a company's preparation, there is no evidence for any more than one group rehearsal prior to a performance of a play, and so rehearsal could not have meant running through the play as a modern company might, with a detailed approach to working out and deciding on its staging; nor is there any evidence for the staging being overseen from the perspective of a single privileged spectator (the director). Gurr and Ichikawa assert that '[playing]

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Worthen. W. B., *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.108.

⁹⁴ Tiffany Stern distinguishes between the 'instruction' available to boy actors in the boy companies from that available to adult players in the adult companies, [Stern, Tiffany, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.41-5].

companies, having so little time for rehearsal, must have blocked their crowd scenes in standard forms familiar to every player', this may be true but it is equally plausible that early modern, ensemble companies needed just two or three weeks rehearsal time for a play precisely because they did *not* need to block their productions, rather they relied on a set of flexible and familiar stage practices that they knew they could call on instinctively: practices that were the product of experience.⁹⁵ The work of contemporary ensemble approaches to Shakespeare reveals an alternative model for early modern rehearsal and playhouse performance (based not on modern notions of blocking and visual stage geographies), in which movement and the actors' responsive uses of the stage in relation to their fellow actors and an expectant and complicit audience are more important (and more productive) than pre-planned interpretations.

W. B. Worthen argues that the performativity of Shakespeare's Globe rests (in part) on its claim to 'evoke the pastness of the text and what the text represents [...] in the present action of performance', that through 'reconstructing both the material frame and the spatial and proxemic relations of Shakespeare's playhouse, Globe performance claims a performative and historical privilege, as though the framing structure will release the behaviours that originally made the plays "work" from their captivity in the text and their inaccessibility to the trends of modern theatre'.⁹⁶ However, this is only partly true, for there are many textualities that Globe performances participate in and challenge, and though Worthen's principal interest (like that of many academic, critical and informed

⁹⁵ Gurr and Ichikawa, p.42.

⁹⁶ Worthen, W. B., *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.29.

spectators – particularly those with a book to write) might lie in the relationship between the printed texts and theatrical performance (expressed through an extensive and established language of citation and analysis), there are many for whom the principal interest will be the textuality of Shakespeare in performance more generally – and the ways by which *this* performance confirms, challenges, exceeds or falls short of a spectator's expectations in relation to Shakespeare on stage, the work of a particular actor/director/designer/company, or a particular building.

Shakespeare's Globe both does and does not claim a privileged access to the spaces of an original and authenticating Shakespeare. As a modern, material, construction, the building does attempt to define the formal properties of a place the like of which Shakespeare, in part, wrote for.⁹⁷ However, the contemporary performances and approaches described above are all shaped to some degree by a recognition of the impossibility of the task of attempting to reclaim Shakespeare's spaces – for, no matter how much a particular production benefits from researches into original practices and is supported and shaped by the historical claims of a building, the performances themselves all aim to exploit to the maximum the immediate potentialities of a present moment in time. Despite their production in a reconstructed Globe, such performances recognise that Shakespeare's original spaces are not available to be reclaimed because they were temporal happenings, produced at a moment which is never again available – the past might be inscribed in the present, but the primordial experience is always of the present, of the *nowness* of now.

⁹⁷ Although this should be treated with some degree of caution, as Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance also at court, for touring and for performance in a wide range of other locations, and on a wide range of appropriated and temporary stages.

The tactically produced moments of space that constituted Tim Carroll's *Twelfth Night* (like Northern Broadsides' *The Comedy of Errors*) were the product of actors working both with and against the formal properties of their places of performance at specific moments in time (they were not simply defined and limited by those properties). In an important sense, what Carroll's production reveals is that the 'spatial and proxemic relations of Shakespeare's playhouse' were precisely not reconstructed through the building of the new Globe playhouse, for the simple reason that 'spatial and proxemic relations' are socially and culturally produced – revealed and encountered as a moment of production which is always a present moment. Charging spectators £5 for entry to the yard and £33 for a seat with excellent sight-lines in one of the galleries at Shakespeare's Globe in no sense begins to reproduce the culturally freighted spatial and proxemic dynamics of the relationship between play, yard and galleries of four hundred years ago – for these are not available to be reclaimed.

Gurr and Ichikawa argue that the stages of the early modern amphitheatres 'demanded a style of acting that modern approaches have largely forgotten'.⁹⁸ But this may not be entirely true, there are plenty of ensemble, touring and other companies working on thrust stages and in theatres-in-the-round (and in other more unconventional places and contexts) whose engagement both with their places of performance and their audiences is dynamic and not the product of predetermined blocking arrangements and stage geographies. What the above companies and productions reveal are a set of possibilities for theatrical performance that hold open doors to understanding Shakespeare that

⁹⁸ Gurr and Ichikawa, p.71.

conventional practices and discourses deny or make difficult. For Gurr and Ichikawa, 'every object and item of clothing worked as a signifier' – in other words, principally a textual element whose meaning is derived from how it is read.⁹⁹ But to leave it at that denies other meanings and forms of knowledge a prop or costume might generate in the contexts of its use by actors in performance. Paul Chahidi's costume for Maria (*Twelfth Night*, 2002) presented her to the eye as an early seventeenth century, respectable lady. For Chahidi, 'the costume [...] was a massive revelation. The corset [...] gave you a posture [...] you had to move in a certain way. You had to be very upright in your carriage [...] We had read about the upright posture and smooth deportment, but actually, it was impossible to do anything else'.¹⁰⁰ Meaning and significance are not limited to what can be seen and heard, in this instance movement articulates a logic and produces knowledge – a knowledge which is not going to be the same for the actor as it is for the spectator. With its origins in the possibilities presented by his corset, Chahidi's movement is part of the production of a moment of space in which more is experienced by the audience (and the actor) than simply the recognition of the role, status and identity of the character inside.

4.3 COMMON PLAYERS AND THE PLAYHOUSE: THE LOGICS OF BODIES AND PLACES

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Gabriel Egan notes that 'modern ensemble acting requires lengthy rehearsals which were unknown on the early modern stage [but this] should not be taken as evidence that the acting was mere declamation without emotion', nor should we infer from this that

⁹⁹ Gurr and Ichikawa, p.53.

¹⁰⁰ Carson and Karim-Cooper, p.208.

declamation with emotion was necessarily always the over-riding objective of an individual player (even the modern actors, schooled in the practice of performing coherent and, usually, psychologised characters, referred to in the first part of this chapter say significantly more about stage practices, about the particular demands of ensemble playing and the relationships between a production and its audience, than about their approaches to the performing of individual characters and lines).¹⁰¹ Similarly, Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern's assertion that, in the absence of any more than one group rehearsal for a new play, players prepared individually for their performances, should not necessarily lead us to imagine a stage characterised by a series of entrances and exits of individually inscribed performances – though individual players may have rehearsed separately, this does not mean they performed independently of, or unresponsive to, the performances of others.¹⁰² A part may well have been learned by an individual player in isolation, and practiced for the potential relationships it suggested between words, gestures and actions, but it was done so by a member of a company of players who knew their part would have to be worked into a stage texture born of movement and interaction, responsive to other players (most of whom he knew of old) and to the shifting demands of the stage/audience dynamic – in other words, through the deployment of necessarily flexible ensemble practices. It is quite conceivable that one of the reasons the early modern player did not rehearse a play more than once with his company was precisely because, in an important sense, he already knew both what he had to do and what he could rely on – reading his roll gave him some clues as to what was expected of

¹⁰¹ Egan, Gabriel, "Theatrical Conditions and Organisation. Theatre Building and Equipment, Theatre Personnel" in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* ed. by Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells, 2001, accessed online at < <http://www.gabrielegan.com/publications/Egan2001s.htm> > [27 June 2009].

¹⁰² Palfrey, Simon and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp.70-3.

him in performance, but (just as important) his professional experience had equipped him with the skills, instincts and knowledges that (he knew) enabled him to survive and succeed (largely unrehearsed) on stage.

Though the playhouses and the platform stages they contained constituted dominant and dominating spaces, success for the enterprises and economies that produced them was dependent on the players' appropriation of both the stage and the architecture of which it was part. Previous chapters have shown how the early modern player produced dramatic space through stage practices that enabled flexible and tactical responses to the localised conditions of performance, and which responded to and exploited broader spatial anxieties of a period concerned with a perception of social space as a vulnerable commodity. This chapter argues that it was this that enabled the liminality of playhouse production to exploit its position as both part of the perceived problem of transgressive spatial production and part of the solution – on the one hand, an 'alluring' cultural and social activity still associated with the 'haunting' of borrowed spaces, on the other hand an activity emanating (in the capital) largely from fixed, purpose-built places that sought to define, organise and control their spaces of performance. One of the concerns of this chapter is to demonstrate the inadequacy of those approaches to theatrical performance rooted in topographical readings of the stage and discursive logics of conventional stage practices to describe and account for the relationships between the spatial practices implied by the playtexts, the buildings for which they were in part conceived, and the uses to which the actors and spectators put these relationships.

Scripts, Weimann notes, constitute points of intersection in the transactional exchanges of early modern theatre. 'Users of a text [may not be] its makers', but indirectly they are – playtexts are conceived dialogically (that is, with a view to an eventual realisation by actors, on a stage, working with and for audiences).¹⁰³ Though agreeing with States that 'a play is an exercise for realising the possibilities of the actor', this chapter goes further and argues that, in early modern London, a play was also an exercise for realising the possibilities of an audience and (for those conceived with a view to performance in one of the new amphitheatres) the yet-to-be-fully-discovered possibilities of a building.¹⁰⁴ If the early modern theatrical event functioned as 'a closed field of force', then it did so by drawing on the characteristics and properties of buildings and audiences whose capacities for engagement it had helped produce, as they had helped determine the plays written for them.¹⁰⁵ If States locates performance in 'the gap between the hypothetical and the real', and Weimann on a threshold, in other words always 'between things', this chapter examines the nature of the spaces constituting this between-ness; spaces opened up by performance, experienced not in terms of their otherness (their similarity, proximity, relationship to other 'types' of spaces) but as unique embodied moments.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.17.

¹⁰⁴ From States particular phenomenological stance, 'Burbage was the *second* actor to play Hamlet', from mine he was the *first*. Just as the Globe stage, in being the first 'unworthy scaffold...to bring forth [s]o great an object', helped Shakespeare conceive *King Henry V*, so Burbage helped Shakespeare birth Hamlet. [States, Bert O., *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: on the Phenomenology of Theatre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) pp.128-131.]

¹⁰⁵ States, p.135. Weimann, 2000, pp.185-86. Bruster and Weimann, pp.31-56.

¹⁰⁶ States, p.127.

Weimann's notion of a space '(in)dividable' is founded on a conception of a spatiality in which the space represented in (and through) performance overlapped in the early modern playhouse with the material place of its performance:

Since there was both continuity and discontinuity between these two types of space, the drama in production, drawing on both the products of the pen and the articulation of voices and bodies, could through their interactions constitute at best an "indifferent boundary" between them.¹⁰⁷

But how the production of this space was achieved in practice (especially in relation to an audience whose contributions to and engagements with 'these two types of space' Weimann, I would argue, does not fully take into account) Weimann is not so clear about, and his argument that it came about through the early modern players' uses and development of the interplay between *locus* and *platea* does not elaborate on the actorly practices that would have constituted that interplay. Though denying that he is setting up a dichotomy between *locus* and *platea* as two separate and geographically defined spaces, Weimann nevertheless does at least encourage such a topographical interpretation of his ideas through frequent references to performance space in relation to actors' stage positionings and his lack of clarity as to what he means by 'actors' conventions'.¹⁰⁸ Arguing for a notion of the indivisibility of space produced through flexible, ensemble performance practices (in which space was constantly perceived and apprehended not as a fixed entity fluctuating between distanced representation and the localised materiality of 'the play in the world', but more as a process, a constantly mutating and developing moment), this

¹⁰⁷ Weimann, 2000, p.180.

¹⁰⁸ I would argue that the lack of clarification in this aspect of Weimann's argument (especially when he treats the *locus* as a space bound up in symbolic form, the *platea* as a fissure in the *mise en scène*) makes it very difficult not to imagine the platform stage he describes as comprising two separate but connected areas: a removed, centrally-positioned, *locus*, and a *platea* that occupies the corridor of space that runs round the edges of the stage and is physically closest to the audience., [Weimann, 2000, pp.180-96 – for Weimann's defence against charges of creating a dichotomy between *locus* and *platea*, see endnote 4., p.181].

chapter now proceeds to argue for an approach to an early modern playhouse performance of *King Lear* that recognises the role of ensemble performance practices in the production of dramatic space.

4.3.2 KING LEAR, ENSEMBLE PRACTICES AND THE PLAYHOUSE STAGE: A SPACE (IN)DIVISIBLE

When the King's Men performed *King Lear* at Whitehall on 26 December 1606, they were already an established company with a long history of playing at Court, the Globe and on tour in a range of borrowed sites. Between Christmas 1605 and 24 March 1606, the company performed 10 (unnamed) plays at court before embarking on a summer tour that included Marlborough, Leicester and Dover – as 1606 was a plague year (with deaths rising to a peak in October, and continuing into December) it is quite possible that the company's activities at the Globe were severely restrained (though no formal proclamation to this effect was issued).¹⁰⁹ Bratton's confident assertion that, despite its Whitehall performance, *King Lear* 'was written for performance at the Globe' does not give the full picture (nor does Gurr's assertion that, by 1603, 'the Globe became the sole venue for which Shakespeare's plays were composed').¹¹⁰ Although by 1605 (when *King Lear* was probably composed) the Globe had been the company's London base for 6 years, like all London companies the King's Men needed to tour when possible (it was not an option but a financial necessity) – and it is inconceivable that plays were written and shaped with a single venue in mind. Gurr notes that 'from the time they lost the Theatre in Shoreditch in 1597 until 1602, the Chamberlain's Men seem not have gone on tour at

¹⁰⁹ Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996b), p.304. Chambers, E. K., *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), IV (p.350).

¹¹⁰ Bratton, J. S., (ed.), *King Lear (Plays in Performance)* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1987), p.4. Gurr, 1996b (p.294).

all' (doubtless taking advantage of the lack of restraint on common playing to establish their occupancy of the Globe playhouse). However, this was unusual – they had toured regularly from 1594 to 1597, and they continued touring regularly from 1602 onwards.¹¹¹ It is highly improbable that the company's 5 uninterrupted years at the Globe would have been seen as setting a new precedent whereby playing solely in the London playhouses was the norm; by 1605, the traditional practice of mixing London playing with playing on tour was firmly re-established – defining the theatrical contexts for which *King Lear* was conceived.

Written in the midst of plague, when performances in London playhouses were especially vulnerable to restraining orders (making touring even more of a likely necessity), *King Lear* (like most early modern plays written for common playing) would have been conceived for a variety of locations that included, but was not limited to or solely defined by, the company's London base. In 1605, the King's Men performed on tour in Oxford, Saffron Walden, and the Kent towns of Fordwich, Faversham and Maidstone (a fact which, given the play's own journey through that county, and the company's long history of performing in Kent, should alert us to the existence of those other, non-Globe and provincial audiences and places for whom Shakespeare also wrote).¹¹² After their performance of *King Lear* at Court on St Stephen's night 1606, the company next performed there on 29 December, then on seven more occasions before the end of February 1607 – during which time the plague continued (as it did into the summer). In April 1607, the City (anxious that

¹¹¹ Gurr, Andrew, *Shakespeare on Tour* (London: Shakespeare's Globe Education) <<http://www.globe-education.org/-discovery-space/plays/romeo-and-juliet-2008/production-notes/article-shakespeare-on-tour>> [accessed on 28 June 2009].

¹¹² Gurr, 1996b, p.304.

‘the untimely heat of this season may spread further [the infection of sickness, especially] in the Skirts and Confines of this City’) asked the Lord Chamberlain for a restraint of playing – but there is no record of one being issued.¹¹³ That same year, the King’s Men performed in Dunwich (Suffolk), Oxford, Barnstaple (Devon) and Marlborough (Wiltshire).¹¹⁴ In 1605, Shakespeare would have hoped that his new play *King Lear* would enjoy a long and successful run at the Globe (and maybe it did), but it is more likely that he wrote it in the certain knowledge that it would have to be staged in numerous locations, on many different stages and for many different audiences.

Shakespeare was probably more certain of the company of players who would perform *King Lear* (and work on the production on tour and in its various places of performance) than he was of the specific venues and locations in which it would be performed. Of the eleven player sharers of the former Lord Chamberlain’s Men (including those listed in Jonson’s 1598 *Every Man in His Humour*), seven continued as player sharers in the King’s Men. In addition, Alexander Cook (a ‘hired man’ in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men) also went on to be a player sharer in the King’s Men, James Sands (another hired man in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men) continued in the King’s Men as an apprentice, and Thomas Vincent (an assistant in the earlier company) also continued as an apprentice.¹¹⁵ Of the fifteen named members of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in 1598, nine went on to become the backbone of the King’s Men – including William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage and John Heminges. Whatever other constraints and possibilities influenced Shakespeare’s writing

¹¹³ Chambers, IV, p.339.

¹¹⁴ Gurr, 1996b, pp.304-5.

¹¹⁵ Gurr, 1996b, pp.303-4.

of *King Lear* for performance on the Globe and other stages in 1605 (whatever part the possibilities of the Globe playhouse and its audiences played in the shaping of its conception), the end of which he could be most certain of was a relatively stable company of men he had had many years of writing for and playing alongside. These men's strengths, weaknesses and preferences he knew well; their stage practices he was intimate with; they were those the company had been nurturing and developing over the previous decade or longer. By 1605, the ensemble had performed together in four London playhouses (Newington Butts, the Theatre, the Curtain and the first Globe), at Court, the Inns of Court, in noblemen's houses (both in the capital and outside) and had spent a considerable amount of time on tour together (travelling to and performing in venues as far a field as Bristol, Dover, Rutland, Norwich and Leicester).¹¹⁶ With the threat of immediate closure always a possibility for the playhouses, plays were conceived for touring and alternative locations as much as they were to celebrate and exploit the particular playhouse associated with a playing company. A performance of *King Lear* on the Globe stage may perhaps have been the ideal for which Shakespeare wrote; but its performance at that venue was, like every other, an accommodation by the players to the particular demands made by a specific venue and a specific local audience. In the discussion of *King Lear* that follows, of equal significance to the Globe playhouse as a formative factor in the shaping of the play's potential significances in performance is the nature of the King's Men as an established and experienced ensemble company of players, proficient in the deployment of flexible staging practices that appropriated their

¹¹⁶ Gurr, 1996b, p.294.

places of performance and turned them to theirs and their audience's immediate advantage.

When the King's Men performed *King Lear* in 1606 at Whitehall, they would have done so on a stage in the Banqueting House already 'bordered by a prototype proscenium arch'.¹¹⁷ Serlio's *Architettura* (1537-51) was still to arrive in English translation in Britain, but even here (on a bordered stage at Court) can be seen one element in a lengthy process of separating out the 'carefully designed imaginary space in the world of the story [from] the place of playing' that would find its fullest expression in the division between the darkened auditoria and separately lit stages of later indoor theatres.¹¹⁸ For Serlio, perspective and its framing enabled theatrical production to operate through the production of 'scenes' for the actors 'to play in':

To talk of playing *in* a scene was, right at the outset, to recognize the absorbing quality, the integrating strength of the imaginary locale, and to differentiate the site of dramatic action from the world of the audience.¹¹⁹

Though it is still some way from this 'major [shift] of spatial perception in the early modern period' to the recognisably modern practice of identifying a scene with a specific location, modern editors of Shakespeare's plays continue to suggest that such a relationship is an intrinsic and essential aspect of the play's dramaturgy.¹²⁰ Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (the editors of the most recent collection of Shakespeare's plays, *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*), though anxious to rid Shakespeare's plays of the accretions of three hundred years of editorial interventions that 'have mixed Folio and

¹¹⁷ John Orrell in Weimann, 2000, p.189.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ Weimann, 2000, p.190.

Quarto texts, gradually corrupting the original *Complete Works* with errors and conflated textual variations', nonetheless offer their own 'corruptions' by placing the action of each scene of *King Lear* in a specific location.¹²¹ The editors of *Timon of Athens* in the Arden Shakespeare (Third Series) are more aware of the problematic nature of associating modern conceptions of place with the space of the early modern stage, nonetheless they too feel obliged to find a specific, representational context for the scenes (as the first footnote for the play's opening scene demonstrates):

I.1 – Location: on Shakespeare's stage this scene would no doubt have been played on the main, bare platform, but the implied location is a courtyard or ante-chamber of Timon's house, where various of his friends are gathering, entering in small groups by different doors.¹²²

It is notoriously difficult to speak with any confidence about the precise locations for scenes in Shakespeare's plays. Bernard Beckerman has shown that of the 345 scenes that make up Shakespeare's plays, most (over 200) given no indication of locality – the rest mainly indicate either unspecified indoor or exterior contexts (with perhaps only the vaguest sense of actual locality).¹²³ Though some locations are specified or are otherwise clearly identifiable from the dialogue (such as Regan's or Gloucester's house), more often than not, the precise location is either ambiguous, of indirect relevance or else irrelevant. The flexible stages of early modern dramatic production (including those of the playhouses) delighted not in the production of a fixed sense of locality but in the interplay between realism and self- and audience awareness – an interplay that could fully accommodate the dramatic change from presumed locality to neutral place (the here-and-

¹²¹ Bate, Jonathan and Eric Rasmussen, (eds.), *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, The Modern Library Edition (New York: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2007) dust jacket.

¹²² Dawson, Anthony, B. and Gretchen E. Minton (eds.) *Timon of Athens*, The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (London: Cengage Learning, 2008) p.159.

¹²³ Weimann, 2000, p.190.

now of dramatic performance) back to locality within a single line of dialogue, for example:

EDMUND

I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the
firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

Enter Edgar

Pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is
villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam. – O, these
eclipses do portend these divisions. Fa, sol, la, mi.

(King Lear, 1.2.131-37)

Gwilym Jones notes a long tradition ('in the popular imagination, in the language of theatre professionals, in the published works of academics') of assuming a heath as the location for the storm scenes in *King Lear* – a heath that is 'not evident in anything that Shakespeare wrote'.¹²⁴ Arguing that 'the idea of Lear on the heath originates in a specifically visual theatrical setting', Jones relates this to particularised readings of the text predicated on the stability of fixed and identifiable locations – in which 'location informs meaning'.¹²⁵ *King Lear* was written for and performed in theatrical contexts predating more modern concerns with 'unified, representational, and localized' settings; like its Elizabethan forebear, the Jacobean stage was 'not of a piece and allow[ed] for considerable heterogeneity in the purposes of playing'.¹²⁶ The single, unified, perspective of the textual reader, looking for stability and recognisable (and often symbolic) contexts, and the interpretations this engenders, stands in marked contrast to the multiple perspectives offered by a playwright crafting parts for actors and a play for audiences who

¹²⁴ Jones, Gwilym, *The Problem of the Heath* (London: Shakespeare's Globe Education) <<http://www.globe-education.org/node/687>> [accessed 28 June 2009].

¹²⁵ Ibid. The heath first appears in a stage direction to Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition of the play – Rowe probably derived it from the scenery used in Nahum Tate's version of the play (with its happy ending).

¹²⁶ Weimann, 2000, p.190.

did not expect an exclusively representational poetics.¹²⁷ Jones' assertion that an approach to *King Lear* that is true to the text would 'speak of the characters in terms of what is happening to them, rather than where they are' is a reminder of a more complex and multiperspectival model of representation – whereby the importance of location rests not in its representation but in how it is variously experienced by those who inhabit and encounter it.¹²⁸

Different characters in the drama articulate different responses to their locations through what Manfred Pfister calls 'figure perspectives' (the specific and unique perspectives of individual characters on their environments).¹²⁹ Arguing that a dramatic text such as *King Lear* offers 'a pattern of contrasting and corresponding figure perspectives', Pfister demonstrates how the imposition of a single perspective and locale on early modern plays not only fails to take account of their multiperspectival complexity, it also risks reductivity. Jones makes the same point when he argues that the tendency to prioritise the heath as symbolic location in *King Lear* is not only an intervention in the spatiality suggested by the text (in many ways a negation of it), it also bypasses what is the real focus of the language – the storm and the character's reactions to it:

When place is a significant factor in a character's meaning or situation, then, place is woven into the diction. If there is no such indication of place, it is not too much to say that the character's meaning and situation depend on other factors, whether they be another character's speech, the recognition of their own subjectivity or an event not specific to location: the night, for example, or a storm.

¹²⁷ Although outside of the bounds of this thesis, I would argue that, though Hamlet's advice to the players (*Hamlet* III.2.21) was precisely to this end ('to imitate nature'), yet this is being given by a classically trained scholar in the contexts of a Court performance – rather than reflecting a general treatise on the purposes of playing, it relates most specifically to a very particular mode of academic and scholarly performance. [See Weimann, 2000, p.191].

¹²⁸ Jones.

¹²⁹ Pfister, Manfred, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980 p.59).

Indeed, in response to Kent's urgent question, 'Where's the King?', the Gentleman does not respond helpfully, but poetically: 'contending with the fretful element' (3.1.2-3). The Gentleman obviously knows where Lear is, but chooses instead to prioritise his mental state and his actions. This little exchange is a microcosm of the play. By thinking of Lear as 'on the heath', we make a mockery of textual evidence.¹³⁰

One of the implications of this is that location on the early modern stage was significant only in so far as it related both to what characters did on stage (action) and how they perceived and responded to their poetically invoked environment. Of course, 'the text' of *King Lear* that Jones previously refers to is itself a highly problematic notion, especially in relation to the play's presentation of action, its various relationships to locations and its production of space. The 1608 Quarto and the 1623 Folio suggest radically different conceptions of the space for *King Lear* in performance: the divisions the Folio establishes between various units of action (its acts and scenes) encourages an approach disposed to locating each in a specific and identifiable environment – an approach discouraged by the earlier Quarto. The absence of act and scene divisions in the Quarto not only intimates an intended performance space 'we might characterize as *linear* or *sequential*' (italics original), the text's appearance on the page suggests for the play a fluidity of production that is, by comparison, noticeably absent in the Folio.¹³¹ The Folio's conspicuous organisation of the play into acts and scenes produces a highly visible literary structure for it, highlighting the play's constructedness and suggesting for it a quantitative rather than qualitative notion of space.

¹³⁰ Jones.

¹³¹ Turner, Henry S., "King Lear Without: The Heath" in *Renaissance Drama* New Series, XXVII, 1997, ed. by Masten, Jeffrey & W. Walls (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 161-93 (p.182).

The 1608 Quarto's lack of any such clearly defined structural and organising (i.e. measuring) principle suggests (and allows for) a far more fluid sense of space in performance – one defined more by its shifting movements and textures, and a concern for spatial qualities rather than spatial quantities. It is a major weakness of the Cambridge (1994) edition of *The First Quarto of King Lear* that the editor organises the play into the acts and scenes of the later Folio edition – rather than let the pages address the eye as the original manuscript does.¹³² Halio's imposition of the Folio's organisational, structuring principle denies to the reader (and actor, director, designer) the possibility for appreciating how the look of the Quarto page itself suggests a radically different set of possibilities for staging and performance to that suggested by the look of the Folio page. The divisions of the Folio text encourage a tendency to provide the action of the play with a series of specific locations; the continuity that characterises the Quarto text, however, frustrates not only any attempt to read the play as a consecutive series of discrete sections, but also any inclination to place specific moments or periods of action in specific locations – the fluidity of staging implied (and its lack of representational function) is, I would argue, central to the quality of space the 1608 Quarto both reflects and evokes.¹³³

An illustration of this comes in what modern editions (following the lead of the 1623 Folio)

¹³² Halio, Jay. L., (ed.), *William Shakespeare: The First Quarto of King Lear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹³³ Turner argues further that the Folio's act/scene divisions only make sense 'in the context of the conceptual integrity that the larger "work" provides, and *vice versa*', [Turner p,182]. In other words, speculative as the above reading of the Quarto text is, it offers a plausible response to a text which proceeds without interruption and so does not offer the 'same spatial or structural skeleton to the reader' as does the Folio, [ibid.].

define as the end of act 1 scene 5.¹³⁴ The needs of representation demand that this scene (and its location) be, if not isolated, at least separated and made distinct from what has gone before (1.4) and what comes after (2.1). In the Folio, the exits of Goneril and Albany are taken to signify the end of one scene (1.4), the subsequent entry of Lear, Kent, Gentleman and Fool the start of the next (1.5) – the break between them enabling a conceptual shift from one temporal location to another. Similarly, the *Exeunt* of Lear, the Gentleman and the Fool are taken to mark the end of 1.5, with the subsequent entries of Edmund and Curan marking not only the beginning of a new scene but also a new act. The emphatic sense of division between acts and scenes that characterises the Folio's highly structural approach to the spatiality of *King Lear* is in marked contrast to the less demarcated, more expansive and constantly evolving spatiality suggested by the Quarto text. With no clear-cut divisions carving the play up into separate units of action, a moment such as the exit of one group of characters and the entry of another, rather than marking the end of one moment and the beginning of another, becomes part of a single moment through which the action develops and the space mutates. It is much more of a sense of one group of actors handing over the space to another group, who pick up the space and, immediately, intervene in and change it. The same moment (the Folio's end of 1.5) is treated very differently by the 1608 Quarto: the staggered (rather than collective) exits of the servant, Lear and the Fool overlap with the entries of *Bastard and Curan meeting* (the stage direction *Enter* for the two placed immediately below the Fool's *Exit* at the bottom of the page, before being repeated and expanded at the top of the next page). Rather than separating out two moments of action from each other and distinguishing

¹³⁴ The respective pages from the 1608 Quarto are reproduced as Appendix 1, the relevant 1623 Folio page is reproduced as Appendix 2.

between them (creating a definite ending and an equally definite beginning), the Quarto seems to suggest that the second moment (the meeting of Bastard and Curan) evolves out of the first – there is a gradual emptying of the stage (as first the Servant and Lear exit, followed shortly after by the Fool) and refining of the focus, this is then balanced by the entrances of Bastard and Curan from two different places (who pick up and share a more diffuse focus which, as they come together, narrows to a single point – the ‘*meeting*’).

The Folio produces a break between what it defines as two separate moments (the end of 1.5 and the beginning of 2.1), and handles the transition between them by differentiating between them. The Quarto’s staggered exits are replaced in the Folio by a single *Exeunt*, which (coming immediately after the Fool’s last lines) produces an emphatic closure for the scene (and act) by emphasising that *all* exit. There is no indication as to what happens next (as in the Quarto, where this moment is immediately followed by *Enter*), instead a bold line across the column of text draws both the scene and the act to a definite end. The new act and scene are underscored in a number of other ways: the language changes from English to Latin (*Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.*), the font size is increased significantly, its style becomes cursive, the first letter of each word capitalised (thereby turning this intervention into a title), and the line of text is framed and isolated from the rest of the text by two bold lines – one above, and one below. The title, set apart from the preceding and proceeding lines of playtext in a pool of white, draws to a close one section of the play and initiates another. It would be difficult for a production based on the Folio not to take its structural organisation of the play into account in performance. By drawing a line (literally) under what has gone before and placing the act/scene number in a pool of

white, the Folio's compositor has produced a space marking out not only beginnings and endings, but also introducing fissures between what it presents as separate units of action implying (and encouraging) a sense of separate time and location for each. It is an approach entirely absent from the continuous and uninterrupted format of the Quarto. The Cambridge Quarto edition again lets us down here (not just by providing act and scene divisions not in the original manuscript), it also demonstrates its own allegiance to theatrical and literary practices and understandings at variance with those of the culture that produced the 1608 Quarto by breaking up the Quarto's continuous flow and placing similar, Folio-style pools of empty white space on the page between acts and scenes – suggesting (and producing) a fragmentation that is entirely alien to the actual Quarto text.

The point at which the Fool exits and the Bastard and Curan enter (the end of 1.5 and the beginning of 2.1) coincides, in the Quarto text, with the bottom of a page. Although the compositor follows convention by repeating the *Enter* at the bottom of the page at the top of the next page (a practice particularly employed in the printing of Quartos, where the collation of pages printed recto-versally then cut up in four was a cause of potentially erroneous pagination), the Quarto continues to suggest an uninterrupted fluidity that has characterised the play thus far. The staggered exits of the servant, Lear and Fool are not separated from the entrances of the Bastard and Curan and, like previous entrances and exits, neither do they indicate a break in the action. What is suggested here is an evolving spatiality, requiring for its effectiveness not the pauses between sections which enable us to make the necessary adjustments in our stagings and imaginations to produce new localities, but a space capable of being reshaped in the various moments of performance

into spaces differentiated by quality rather than quantity or representational function – produced, that is, through ‘character groupings and their movements [...] movements [which] are *not* correlated with any sense of “place”’.¹³⁵

A spatial texture which begins with verse and Goneril plotting against her father (1.3) evolves through prose and a Lear who is isolated and made the butt of the Fool’s jokes (1.4). For a brief moment at the start of 1.5 Kent accompanies Lear, his presence invoking the sense of solidity and loyalty that was established for him in the opening scene and which developed through 1.4. The space then narrows to a sharp point of focus claimed by the solitary Fool (alone on stage for just two lines), before opening out, as from behind the Fool enter (from different entrances) the Bastard and Curan, who (as the Fool exits) meet together and form another point of focus – one that is qualitatively different to that previously produced by the solitary Fool. The Bastard and Curan’s entrances claim the focus from the Fool – the quality of this helping to produce the conspiratorial mood essential to Curan’s communication of the ‘news abroad [...] the whispered [...] news-bussing arguments’ (2.1.6-7). The audience are drawn in (literally, in terms of how the focus is constructed at this point), the sense of space produced by the Bastard and Curan being essential (and elemental) to how the subsequent entrance of Edgar is received. What was experienced here (by both players and spectators) was not a change of scene and location, rather the continuous development of an elusive and ephemeral spatiality whose origins lay in the flexible performances of common playing as it had been practiced

¹³⁵ Turner, p.182. See also Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern on how repeated cues also function to ‘direct actors towards real ensemble acting’, [Palfrey and Stern p.240].

¹³⁷ Turner, p.182.

in numerous appropriated sites over many decades. Approaching this spatial development in terms of a sequence, or succession, of different spaces, (an approach encouraged by the Folio's arrangement of the action), makes it difficult (if not impossible) to appreciate how the entrances of the Bastard and Curan mark a point in the evolution of a single space of performance that, in its present moment of production, is also experienced as a return to (though a highly inflected and nuanced one) something of the qualities of space experienced earlier – when, at the end of I.4 Goneril, Oswald and Albany shared the stage; or the last time that two wholly villainous characters (Goneril and Oswald) occupied the stage together (I.3).

Discussing the differing spatialities offered by the two versions, Turner aligns 'the Folio with what I will call a "readerly" space of quantifiable, measured extension and the Quarto with a "performative" space of movement that produces more of itself'.¹³⁷ John Heminge and Henry Condell's dedication and prefatory epistle to the Folio alerts us to the relationships between the plays as organised, written texts and the actual practices through which they were originally conceived and performed, received and understood. Aimed at 'the great Variety of Readers', Shakespeare's plays are presented by the Folio's editors as finished products which, through having 'had their triall already [in the playhouses], and stood out all Appeals', are deemed 'quitted rather by Decree of Court' – in other words, though the plays were tested in the court of public appeal (the commercial playhouses and other sites of theatrical production), their acquittal frees them to be fixed in print (and so accrue to themselves a textual authority independent of their previous associations with common playing and the practices of the commercial

theatres).¹³⁸ The Folio's authorisation of these particular printed texts, establishes a way of perceiving them that will go on to play a significant role in shaping the ways by the plays are expected to work in theatrical production.¹³⁹

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 2007 *William Shakespeare: Complete Works* claims to be 'the first authoritative, modernized, and corrected edition of Shakespeare's first folio in three centuries', but it is an authority which is also (it is claimed) derived from an assumption that the 'dynamic scholarship' underpinning it 'reveals [Shakespeare's] living text'.¹⁴⁰ Though the editors acknowledge that the plays as they are found in the first Folio are a long way from the actual parts Shakespeare wrote for his performers (and that most of his plays were originally published in Quarto form anyway), their own editorial approaches are based on 'respecting the integrity of the Folio [and] using the Quartos to correct its printing errors', rather than exploring the Quartos for how they might present alternative approaches to the plays to those available through the Folio.¹⁴¹ Discussing the various texts of *King Lear*, the editors note that, though the 1608 and 1619 Quartos 'represent two different stages in the life of the play', the development from these to the 1623 Folio represents a move towards greater clarity and theatricality. But the theatricality they are speaking of (and which clarity assists) is to do with the presentation of character and narrative, and making these explicable to a modern audience attuned to

¹³⁸ Weimann, 2000, pp.52-3.

¹³⁹ Of course, this should not blind us to the fact that the Quarto was also aimed at readers. Douglas Brooks draws attention to the ways in which the *King Lear* Quarto was typographically marked 'for the kind of select, literary readership to which "failed" playwrights like Jonson sought to market themselves' – however, this does not preclude it also reflecting a very particular mode of spatial production as distinct from that suggested by the later Folio text, [Brooks, Douglas, A., *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.59].

¹⁴⁰ Bate and Rasmussen, dust jacket.

¹⁴¹ Bate and Rasmussen, p.lv.

modes of psychological realism and a theatre that privileges a single, homogeneous, purpose of playing – rather than those forms of theatricality associated with the highly physicalised approaches of ensemble performances, in which the purposes of playing are more varied and production itself something more heterogeneous. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the editors' first footnote for *King Lear* (1.1 Location: the royal court, Britain) provides a specific locale for the opening action that, while it might satisfy a modern concern for coherence and plausibility, has little to do with the sort of non-representational and mutable space suggested by the 1608 Quarto.¹⁴² Critical of those editors who have 'for centuries [...] conflated the Quarto and Folio texts [to create] a play Shakespeare never wrote', Bate and Rasmussen themselves produce a play Shakespeare never wrote – albeit one sanctioned by a discursive authority that post-dates the unofficial and unsanctioned practices that produced and gave form to Shakespeare's original 'living text'.¹⁴³

Both Folio and Quarto texts of *King Lear* use the term 'Bastard' rather than the name 'Edmund' for Gloucester's illegitimate son – a label rather than a name, it suggests (for the player) a role to be played rather than a rounded and psychologised character to be expressed. Both Halio and the editors of the RSC *Complete Works* let us down here, their decision to name the character as 'Edmund' throughout continues to deny to the eye an awareness of those dramatic codes at work in a theatre practice that relied for much of its effectiveness on the stage's capacity both to create the illusion of reality and (often at the same time) to undermine it – where complicity, discovery and collaborative endeavour,

¹⁴² Bate and Rasmussen, p.2009.

¹⁴³ Bate and Rasmussen, p.2008. Weimann, 2000, p.48.

were not secondary levels of production, but were part of the primary purposes of commercial playing. Weimann notes that the authority of drama in the early modern playhouses ‘accrued in the *process* and as a *result* of verbal and corporeal articulations’ (italics original); I would go further, and argue that these ‘corporeal articulations’ were contained within a spatial production of meaning that was only partly inflected by the verbal text.¹⁴⁴ An important difference between Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and the earlier, popular, *King Leir* (a difference that would have had a significant impact on how an audience familiar with *Leir* would have responded to the later version) is in the spatial work of its opening scene – which begins, not with the king surrounded by his court, lamenting the loss of his queen and advertising his need to find husbands for his daughters, but with the entry of two nobles (already in the middle of a discussion), while a third man (‘Bastard’) remains at a distance.¹⁴⁵ The Quarto and the Folio’s preference for role (bastard) over name (Edmund) is significant; not only does the term privilege social and cultural status and theatrical function over character and individuality, it also underscores a social distance for the role that is reflected in and produced by his staging – his *figurenposition* (that correlation between stage positioning ‘and the speech, action and degree of stylization associated with that position’) giving him a vice-like role which is highly visible and which is clearly and spatially established at the very start of the play.¹⁴⁶

One of the first spatial moves of Shakespeare’s play is to separate the Bastard from the

¹⁴⁴ Weimann, 2000, p.49.

¹⁴⁵ *King Leir*, ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002) pp.3-6.

¹⁴⁶ Weimann, 1987, p.224. Weimann applies the term *figurenposition* to those characters whose liminal position (they are both part of the illusionistic drama and they are able to stand outside of it and comment on the drama – thereby engaging the audience in a critical perspective on it) enables them to use the openness of the platform stage to achieve a special relationship with the audience and ‘a special role and meaning within the play’ [Weimann, 1987 (p.225)]. The concept of *figurenposition* is applied and discussed by Michael Mooney in relation to the various personae adopted by Edgar in *King Lear* [Mooney, Michael, “‘Edgar I Nothing Am’: ‘Figurenposition’ in ‘King Lear’” in *Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985) 153-66].

other characters, and to construct him as both a point of focus (he remains silent as he is discussed by Kent and Gloucester) and (subsequently) as a mediator of focus – as he increasingly comes to direct the audience onto the other characters and his own involvement in the stage action. It is a relationship between the character, role, stage action and the audience that is established early in the play – in the opening 500 lines, the Bastard is the only character who has the stage to himself (enabling him not only to share his malevolent intentions with the audience, but to create an intimate relationship and sense of complicity with them that is not shared by any of the other characters).

The opening lines of Shakespeare's play establish a staging for the Bastard that will be developed and expanded on until the final scenes. 'Bastard' is the term consistently used by both Quarto and Folio texts to indicate the character's entrances – until, that is, he enters in 5.1 where, for the first time in the play, the stage direction (in both Folio and Quarto) names him 'Edmund' (this is repeated in the last stage direction for him at the beginning of 5.3). Again, it is the appeal to the eye that this abrupt change makes that I want to note here – an appeal that is impossible to appreciate through modern editions of the play (wherein Edmund is named as such throughout). What the pages of the Quarto and Folio indicate is that for the player, after 2820 lines of text (representing 87% of the play's total), without warning, the 'Bastard' becomes (in terms of his presentation on stage) 'Edmund'. For the player, the change in name signals something of a transformation for the character: though (from the player's perspective) the underlying relationship of the role to the play continues to be underscored by the appellation '*Bast.*' that marks out his lines on the page, yet the stage direction's use of a Christian name for

him suggests that all does not continue precisely as it did before – preparing us (and the early modern player) for the character’s redemption (‘I pant for life. Some good I mean to do’ (5.3.241)) and loss of theatricality (his incapacity) in the closing moments of the play.¹⁴⁷

The shift from Bastard to Edmund indicates a loss of *figerenposition*; no longer the figure of mischief and fun, for the player this change of identity corresponds to a change in theatrical function and the ways by which he has hitherto exploited the properties of the platform stage. It is significant that the (illegitimate) character most obsessed in the play with the desire for land (not money or power) is he who is (through his *figurenposition*) best able to exploit to the fullest the possibilities for distance, detachment and engagement afforded by the platform stage – in other words, the Bastard’s desire for land within the mimetic world of the play finds its dramatic corollary and expression in his ability to exploit the spaces of the stage for maximum theatrical effect. The play’s action begins not with Kent’s utterance, but with three men entering – one of whom detaches himself from the other two, and establishes a *figurenposition* for himself in which not only stage positioning but also the manner of that positioning (the humorous, enterprising and manipulative ways through which it will be established and reinforced) is imbricated into the texture of the character’s performance. If, as performance, the play plots the downward trajectory of a king who, in divesting himself of his land, demonstrates a lack of

¹⁴⁷ It is possible (though unlikely) that there is a more prosaic reason for the shift from *Bastard* to *Edmund*: Peter Blayney notes how *King Lear* placed ‘an unusually heavy strain’ on the italic *E*, it may be that the compositors (in order to conserve the *Es* in their sort boxes) used *Bastard* because to have done otherwise would have required more *Es* than they had available to them – perhaps the shift to *Edmund* towards the end of the play was made possible simply because the compositors realised they had enough *Es* left to accommodate this, [*The Texts of ‘King Lear’ and their Origins*, Vol. 1: *Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto* ed. by Peter W. M. Blayney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.129].

interest in and awareness of its territorial nature (a trajectory marked out on stage from a *locus*-practiced to a *platea*-practiced staging for the character), in the Bastard the opposite trajectory is mapped out and performed. The Bastard begins the play on the fringes of the action; set apart from Gloucester and Kent in the opening moments, he turns this to his advantage, working from his isolation to claim and mediate focus (a demonstration of his power and authority over the stage) which produces him as the character with the most measured understanding of the stage's potentials and possibilities. His end stands in marked contrast to this, his wounding at the hand of Edgar (5.3.146) disables him and brings to an abrupt halt his various manipulative and enjoyable uses of the stage. Lying on the floor of the stage dying for 107 lines before being borne off neutralises his power – no longer able to exercise authority over the stage and exert a formative influence on the production of its spatialities, his stage journey and his search for land end in a singular loss of territory and an isolation that stands in contrast to that isolation with which he began the play. In direct contrast to Lear's, the Bastard's journey has been from a *platea*-practiced staging (enabling him to control and manipulate both the stage and the audience) to a *locus*-practiced staging (which denies him his theatrical authority and power).

'Bastard' as a role suggests something very different (theatrically) to 'Edmund' as a character, and has profound spatial implications; for, implicated by this is a whole gamut of stage/audience dynamics and interactions dependent on the actors' uses of the stage – articulating stage/audience interactions and dynamics which stand in marked contrast to a (modern) theatre tradition steeped in realism and dependent on empathy and the

spectator's ability to remain a detached observer. In a theatre which pre-dated modern concerns with plausible and rounded characters, and the stage as a mimetic copy of the world, character types like the 'Fool' and the 'Bastard' articulate strands of theatricality that draw attention to the artificiality and construction of the theatre event itself – and imbricates this self-awareness into the texture of performance.¹⁴⁸ Modern textual preferences for 'Edmund' over 'Bastard' deny to the eye of the reader a sense of how the space of the early modern stage was produced not simply by a concern for verisimilitude, but by those elements (roles, stage practices and positionings, stage/audience transactions and interactions) which intervened in and inflected how that verisimilitude was to be perceived, interacted with and experienced by an audience. Lost through a literary and theatrical tradition that insists on presenting fools and vice figures as rounded individuals is the awareness (articulated through both the 1608 Quarto and Folio texts) of a very different conception and practice of theatre as it was produced through these 'types'. When (in both the Quarto and Folio texts) 'Fool' exits at the end of 1.4, immediately to be followed by the entry of 'Bastard', the page reminds us that what was seen and experienced on the early modern stage was not so much one character being replaced by another (the exchange marking the continuation of a seamless, unfolding narrative), as one role handing over to another role – both of which had, inscribed into their theatrical make-up, a dialectical function: to be instigators of change and initiators of action. Both Quarto and Folio texts advertise clearly what is erased by modern editions of this play: that the dramatic potential of characters like 'Fool' and 'Bastard' rests in their capacity to use the stage differently from those characters who are restricted to the

¹⁴⁸ Weimann, 1987, pp.1-6, 133-50, 196-207; Weimann, 2000, 151-79; Potolsky, Matthew, *Mimesis* (London and New York, Routledge, 2006) pp.75-81.

illusionistic world of the play. For those playing 'Fool' and 'Bastard', there is an ambivalence deeply inscribed into their roles; expected to operate within the fiction of the play and outside of it, these are indeed roles which could only exist on the boards of the stage.

The spatial implications of this are clear, the social and theatrical contexts and backgrounds of these roles denote characters expected to demonstrate a high degree of showmanship. This is, literally, a spectacular function, as elemental to such roles was the actor's ability to mediate between the world of the play and the world of the audience – the *figurenpositions* articulated by these characters was dependent to a large degree on the capacity of the players variously to engage the audience, working not in opposition to the illusion of the play but as critics of it – their job was not only to inculcate critical perspectives in the audience, but also to reinforce the narrative and its significances by heightening the audience's experience of the narrative. Like the other seeming interventions in and disruptions to the smooth-flowing narrative of the play in performance that early modern outdoor and public performances would have accommodated, roles such as Bastard and Fool suggest a means by which an audience's engagement and investment in the production, their appreciation of its various significances, were intensified. Figures of fun and sport, both the Fool and the Bastard exploited their capacity for claiming focus and mediating it onto others – using it to create complicity and to make that a deeply pleasurable and productive experience.

4.3.3 FOLIO AND QUARTO: TEXTS AND PRACTICES

This chapter demonstrates that the presentation and organisation of the Folio text is often presumed to give it a superiority over the 1608 Quarto version of *King Lear*, and that this operates as part of a broader scriptural economy, the basis of whose authority resides in notions of the Folio's completeness and literary coherence. But the practical consequences of the tendency to privilege the Folio over and above the Quarto texts of Shakespeare's plays extend beyond the confines of the page and shape the ways by which the plays are deemed to work on stage and how they are received and understood by modern audiences. When Wilson Milam (director, *Othello*, Shakespeare's Globe, 2007) declares 'now that I'm in the Shakespeare world of Folios and Quartos, I'm a First Folio guy. The Quarto's good, but, you know, really it's the First Folio', he is claiming an authority for the Folio that will determine (and to some degree, restrict) the approaches he will take, as director, to the play in rehearsal and onstage.¹⁴⁹ Taking a similar attitude to the various available texts as the editors of the *RSC Complete Works*, for Milam the value of the 2 Quartos of *Othello* lie solely in their ability to provide emendations to the Folio text from which his production takes its inspiration. Although Milam attempts to 'capture the absolute simplicity' of Shakespeare's staging ('we have a table, two benches, one stool and a bed, no stage crew is ever on stage, its always the actors doing it, we don't stop for anything and that's because that's what it was like'), this does not extend to the desire for a non-representational space for the production, which is clearly rooted in a (very) specific historical moment and place:

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Wilson Milam: *Othello*. Dir. Wilson Milam. Heritage Theatre and NHK Enterprises/- Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. 2007. DVD.

I started doing research as you would any play. We decided to have it take place in 1570, the last year before Cyprus was taken by the Turks for good (well, contested to this day). And I started researching pirates – I mean, these men are all near pirates. Barbarosa was an Italian pirate who became a Muslim who then preyed on England, Charles V was invading Tunisia, Italy was still a group of city-states. My analogy for the cast was that it was pretty much the wild, wild West. At this point in time the entire Mediterranean basin was a fairly lawless, fairly ‘the mightiest takes all’ kind of place.¹⁵⁰

It is notable that Milam considers the first priority for his research is to establish a fixed historical period and geographical location for the production. Although acknowledging the unique spatial dynamics and non-representational demands, presented by Shakespeare’s Globe, Milam’s inclination is to relate this to the production of specific locations – rather than to the production of those more elusive and mutable spaces created by the actors’ engagements with, and exploitations, of those dynamics and demands:

What looks vast from out here in the audience if you’re on stage looks tiny, it feels small and intimate, and you grow to love these pillars which seem like they’d be a nuisance and your worst nightmare [...] But I remember the first time walking through the tiring-room onto the stage, and I realised immediately I wanted to be able to exploit that space behind the stage – which becomes a pub in Cyprus (in one of the town square scenes), it becomes the senate chambers, it becomes Brabantio’s house.¹⁵¹

But, of course (especially given the absence of representational scenery), the ‘space behind the stage’ does not actually ‘become’ these locations, rather it is the actors’ creative uses of the various parts of the stage, the tiring-room and central doors and the balcony above them, that evokes these locations for the audience – weaving this into a spatiality in which a precise sense of locale (a fixed sense of historical time and place) matters less than the immediate experience of a vibrant and evolving space. For Milam’s

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

production, no attempt was made to dress the architecture of the stage to give it a specifically late-16th century Venetian quality: Iago and Roderigo enter through the audience in the yard, climb onto the stage, and for the first 65 lines of dialogue occupy the stage area between the two pillars and the yard (occasionally using the wide flight of steps, leading from the front of the platform into the yard, to take the action into the audience). The stage area behind the pillars is not used or acknowledged in any way until Iago calls on Roderigo to 'Call up her father, rouse him ...' (1.1.66-7) – at which point Iago gestures towards the balcony and produces it as Roderigo's (and the audience's) focus. Iago's actions here do more than expand the performance space and begin the process of evoking a sense of the balcony as an extension of Brabantio's house, for Tim McInnerny (Iago) it is the point at which he realises an important aspect of his theatrical function – which is to manipulate and control the stage action. Iago at this point in Milam's production becomes both the producer and mediator of focus; not only does he initiate the work of establishing the existence of Brabantio's house (producing the balcony above the tiring-room doors as a significant point of focus and weaving it into the performance space), he also instigates Roderigo's reactions to and perceptions of that place, and draws the audience's attention to this work. When Roderigo runs to the panels under the balcony and pounds them with his fist, calling up to Brabantio 'What ho! Brabantio, Signior Brabantio, ho!' (1.1.77), Iago follows (rather than leads) – enabling Roderigo's behaviour (rather than Iago's) to take the focus. Brabantio appears above in a nightgown, leaning over the edge to peer into the night, trying to see who is the cause of 'this terrible summons' (1.1.81), as he does so both Iago and Roderigo move away from the tiring-room wall and back into the stage area towards the front of the platform (where they hide

themselves from Brabantio behind the pillars – all the while remaining in full view of the audience). When Roderigo enters the space between the pillars and reveals himself to Brabantio, 'My name is Roderigo' (1.1.93), Iago remains behind the pillar, hiding from Brabantio – from where Iago mediates the focus onto Brabantio and Roderigo's altercation and, having established himself as its architect, enjoys the audience's awareness of his artfulness.

Although a precise sense of location is a primary consideration for Milam, what matters more for the audience are the ways by which location is produced through performance, and imbricated into its broader spatial texture. In a sense, the actually represented location remains invisible to the audience – who are more aware of how the stage is being used and exploited by the actors to demonstrate character, theatrical function and produce a set of perspectives on the action than of how the stage denotes a locale. The open space of Shakespeare's Globe (its possibilities, demands and dynamics) enables McInnery not only to demonstrate his skill as an actor, but also to produce and establish his character's role as one who exploits the possibilities of place to the full. Setting up both Roderigo and Brabantio to be tricked, standing back (behind the pillar) to enjoy this (and ensuring that his enjoyment is fully visible to and shared with the audience), McInnery's performance articulates those stage logics that, recognising and transgressing the logics of place, aim to produce a momentary, more elusive and less fixed spatiality – one that is alert to those possibilities for highlighting the nature of theatre as a self-conscious mode of deception (rather than a self-contained accurate copy of reality).

McInnery does not work in isolation, however, and it is important to note the ensemble nature of the work done by the three actors in these opening moments of the play (whose collaborative approaches produce a space that always takes account of the audience in its construction and handling of focus and balance). Brabantio *appears above*, but he enters a space already pointed out and prepared for him (and the audience) by Iago and Roderigo – first by their not acknowledging it (and so erasing the possibility for its existence, it can only be the tiring-room wall with its balcony above), then by pointing it out and responding and performing in relation to it. Focus is not so much claimed by Brabantio when he enters *above* as passed to him by the two characters below clamouring at his door. Freed from the need to make sense of this interaction through its location within a fixed and recognisable historical/geographical context, the stage works to highlight behaviour, attitudes and motives far more than it does a sense of place. Having established Brabantio as the stage's point of focus, Iago and Roderigo rebalance the stage by moving away from the tiring-room wall and out towards the end of the thrust, from where they align the audience in a shared perspective on Brabantio (*above*) which the two men mediate from the area around the pillars (which they then hover round). The distance between these collective watchers (Iago, Roderigo and the audience) and *Brabantio above* produces a critical space in which Brabantio's rising anger is isolated from the rest of the stage action and made available for scrutiny – at the same time as its means of production (the stage work of Iago and Roderigo) is made a source of deep pleasure and satisfaction.

Acknowledging the contributions of a highly visible audience to the atmosphere and quality of Shakespeare's Globe production, Milam also notes not only their devotion to the performances but also the relationships between some spectators, the production and a very particular notion of Shakespeare's *Othello* as (primarily) a text:

For those first two weeks of rain [...] they didn't leave, they sat there in the rain listening to every word. You see them, every night they have their texts out – they're checking to see what the interpretation is that we're doing here at this particular time. They're wrapped.¹⁵²

Susan Bennett points out that 'the two key elements of production and reception cannot be separated', and the modern (not entirely unfamiliar) practice of spectators attending performances of Shakespeare plays with a copy of the play in their hands is part of a process whereby a mode of performance that was once a 'cultural event' (Andrew Gurr) has given ground to those 'literate expectations' (Leah Marcus) associated with theatre as the staging of a text.¹⁵³ English Touring Theatre's 2002-03 production of *King Lear* seemed to encourage its audiences to make a direct association between performance, text and interpretation as the programme accompanying the production (published by Oberon Books) was made commercially available long after the tour was over and included a full copy of the script being used by the actors. When I saw the production (from a seat towards the front of the balcony at the Theatre Royal, York in November 2002), I noted a large number of spectators (especially in the front rows of the stalls – the most expensive seats in the theatre) following not the visible performance on stage but, as the lines were delivered by the actors on stage, the script contained in the programme. For these spectators it was the text, rather than the performance, that was the object of their focus.

¹⁵² *ibid.*

¹⁵³ Bennett, Susan, *Theatre Audiences: a Theory of Production and Reception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) p.106. Weimann, 2000, p.44.

For them (as for those seated spectators, again those who have paid the most for entry, following Milam's *Othello* by reading the text they had brought with them), authority would seem to reside in a text which pre-exists the performance – authority is already a given, sanctioned by a literary text that, it is presumed, the performance will attempt to interpret.¹⁵⁴

Weimann notes that, in the early modern playhouse, any originating playtext was merely one participant 'in the precarious, unstable circumstances of theatrical production itself', and to extract one element from these circumstances ('a textual end-product') is to separate it from and privilege its status within the wider network of transactions and interactions that constituted 'the collaborative economies necessary for its production'.¹⁵⁵ As Susan Bennett suggests, production does not simply shape reception it is itself also influenced by it; Milam's preference for the Folio and his dismissal of the Quartos of *Othello* demonstrates a prejudicial approach not only to the different texts but also to text in relation to performance (a prejudice shared by those spectators following the performance by reading either their own copies of the text or the one printed in the programme). In his introduction to the text in the programme for English Touring Theatre's *King Lear*, director Stephen Unwin declares that his aim is 'to produce an edition which is clear, straightforward and immediate [which] will encourage actors and readers to approach this most familiar of plays with freshness and an open mind'.¹⁵⁶ Unwin's

¹⁵⁴ The relationships between textual authority and performance are discussed by W.B. Worthen – who also notes the extent to which performance criticism itself 'frames performance as a way to recover meanings intrinsic to the text [and] emulates "literary" methods by locating the text as the source of performative work', Worthen, 1997, p.156.

¹⁵⁵ Weimann, 2000, p.37.

¹⁵⁶ Programme, *King Lear*, English Touring Theatre. (London: Oberon Books, 2002) p.23.

‘effective working script’ relies on extensive cuts (especially of ‘anything which is incomprehensible [and where] characters recap what we already know’) and, significantly, on the cutting of much punctuation and all stage directions – which he identifies (correctly) as largely extraneous interventions in Shakespeare’s own work.¹⁵⁷ However, Unwin’s argument that ‘we should discover Shakespeare’s dramatic demands from his words, and not from what modern editors think’ fails to recognise how his own editorial approach is part of a broader, conventional tendency that, in focusing exclusively on ‘the words’, fails to take into account the contributions made by other textual elements – such as the presentation and layout of the words themselves, the text’s continuity and fluidity, its lack of formal structural divisions (Quarto) or its highly organised and measured breaks (Folio) and its naming of characters and designation of roles (Unwin’s text, for example, continues to prefer the character Edmund to the role Bastard indicated by both the 1608 Quarto and the 1623 Folio). Though Unwin’s preference for presenting the play as a sequence of 24 scenes, rather than the act/scene structure of conventional approaches, gets closer to the sense of continuous, unfolding action of the 1608 Quarto, yet in performance this action was still presented as a succession of separate units of action each with its own specific location (supported by changing lighting states and sound effects).

Henry Turner notes that ‘no play more than *King Lear* so self-consciously engages the power of the early modern open stage to take up and transform, in the process of its fiction and for the duration of that fiction only, the spatial medium in which a dramatic

¹⁵⁷ Programme, *King Lear*, English Touring Theatre. (London: Oberon Books, 2002). pp.23-4.

action took place'.¹⁵⁸ Taking issue with critical attitudes to the play that assert its necessary location in 'a particular place which is also a world', Turner demonstrates how the approaches to text and performance that have shaped these attitudes have given 'spatial form to the larger allegorizing movement from individual to universal – and from stage to page – that allows [critics] to secure the play's ultimate moral and aesthetic relevance'.¹⁵⁹ Peter Holland's responses to Nicholas Hytner's *King Lear* at the RSC and Deborah Warner's *King Lear* at the National (both in 1990) praises '[the former's] simplicity over [the latter's] directorial excess', but the suggestion – that simplicity equates with lack of directorial intervention, and so with a notion of 'letting the text speak for itself' – is bound up with a critical attitude that locates the primary purpose of theatrical production in its ability to generate 'a powerful emotional intellectual force', one that is authorised and confirmed by a pre-existent interpretation of *King Lear* and a predetermined acceptance of the purposes of its theatrical realisation:

I have to record that, midway through the first half of the Stratford production, I found that I was shaking with fear, frightened by the action on stage, and that, going to the National Theatre with high expectations, I found myself often bored, engaged more often in thinking about the production than absorbed by it, able to stay serenely indifferent to the events on stage. Emotional effect is not everything but Warner's method seeks to make the actor into the generator of emotional power. When it does not happen, the production appears to have failed by its own intents. Hytner's work, operatically opulent and inventive, succeeded because the invention cohered, local effects growing into dramatic architecture.¹⁶⁰

For Holland, the process of production at the National intervenes in his experience of the play in performance, detracting from its capacity for generating the 'powerful emotional and intellectual force' that he sees as its purpose. Though the play he is watching is one

¹⁵⁸ Turner, p.165.

¹⁵⁹ Turner, p.163.

¹⁶⁰ Holland, 1997, p.39.

originally conceived to exploit the potentials offered by the interactions between players, places and audiences (a mode of performance that frequently demonstrated its constructedness and which precluded any possibility for its being limited to the presentation of a totally separate world for the play), yet Holland's reception of it is clearly shaped by a very different set of expectations – which are, ultimately, rooted in a conception of *King Lear* as a single and relatively stable and authoritative written text:

Hytner's productions have always been marked by a fresh rereading of the play. Nothing is assumed simply through tradition, theatrical rights of memory; nothing can evade sharp rethinking. Here the rethinking began with the nature of the text. For the first time in England a major production of *King Lear* took full account of recent textual scholarship. Hytner used a Folio text, though there were a few small additions from Quarto, lines actors could not be persuaded to part with but nothing that substantially affected the logic of the Folio text.¹⁶¹

Arguing that Hytner's inclusion of the Quarto's mock-trail section was necessary because 'Folio 3.6 is weak dramatically', Holland justifies this move ('the only major incursion from Quarto') because 'the dramatic and theatrical argument for including Q13.16-51 was convincing. If it affected the textual consistency of the production it did so for sound theatrical reasons'.¹⁶² However, as is the case with the editors of the RSC's *Complete Works*, this depends on one's interpretation of 'theatrical' – which, in this context, for Holland, means the faithful adherence to a coherent and logical structure deemed to reside in the (Folio) text. Applauding the production for its ability to establish specific and plausible contexts for the action, Holland recognises it as a series of separate and discrete scenes that, taken together, present a clearly defined and unifying poetic structure and trajectory for the play:

¹⁶¹ Holland, 1997, pp.39-40.

¹⁶² Holland, 1997, p.40.

[The mock-trial scene] became a pivotal moment of transition and recapitulation [...] a deliberate echo [...] of the opening scene [...] a nightmarish reworking of the opening [...] the placing of the bodies at the end of the play again made carefully to echo the opening scene [...] the mock-trial became a crucial mark of the dramatic shaping, the mid-point of the play's journey, a sign of the distance traversed and that yet to come.¹⁶³

'Distance', in this context, implies something linear, uninterrupted and measurable. In his noting of 'the placing of the bodies at the end of the play' Holland asks 'why else does Shakespeare bring the corpses of Regan and Goneril on stage?'.¹⁶⁴ But Holland's (and Hytner's) response (that it offers a poetic counterbalance to the opening) whilst entirely plausible might not be the only answer, for there are other possibilities and theatrical codes at work here that allow for other dramatic opportunities. Having the two dead bodies brought on produces a new focus and balance for the stage; the exit of the wounded and dying Edmund soon after (if indeed he is carried off – there is no stage direction for this in the Quarto) is then immediately followed by the entry of Lear carrying the body of Cordelia – changing the balance of the stage and preparing it for the final juxtapositioning of two pairs of dead bodies: Goneril and Regan, and Lear and Cordelia. There is balance and poetic unity in this alone, the potential for a coherence independent of how this final moment might counterbalance and relate to the opening of the play. Another, less poetic but more highly theatrical (if conjectural) response to Holland's question might be to consider the implications for the play if it was conceived with the intention of ending not with the Folio's *Exeunt with a dead march* but with a dance. Having the dead bodies of Goneril, Regan, Cordelia and Lear on stage means that, at the end of the play in the Folio edition, all the major characters (though not quite the whole

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

company) are on stage – all, that is, except Gloucester and Edmund (who was carried off 50 lines previously). Given that, by the end of the 16th century the jig with which players popularly ended their performances had become ‘a contained dramatic action [...] the central event in the postlude’, the re-entry of Edmund and Gloucester would allow for some degree of danced improvisation around the familial relationships and issues explored by the play itself – which might allow for some fun to be had out of Edmund’s response to the news of Goneril and Regan’s deaths: ‘I was contracted to them both; all three now marry in an instant’ (5.3.227-28).¹⁶⁵ Dominic Dromgoole’s 2008 production of *King Lear* at Shakespeare’s Globe exploited the performance possibilities offered by having only the dead bodies of the three sisters, Lear and Kent onstage at the end:

Then the entire cast returned to the stage and sang a dirge together. Cornwall and Albany bent over and gently touched the bodies of their wives, both still lying on the stage. Goneril and Regan stood up and, moving across the stage, touched Cordelia. Cordelia stood up and touched her father. Lear stood up, took Cordelia’s hand, and together they joined the singing. Then, when the dirge was finished, the entire company began the wild, swirling, joyous dance that marks the end of plays (whether comedies or tragedies) at the Globe.¹⁶⁶

David Wiles notes how at the end of the first text of Jonson’s *Every Man In His Humour* (written for performance at the Curtain for the Chamberlain’s Men) Cob’s wife appears without her husband before Justice Clement (which means that only 15 out of a cast of 16 are onstage). As the play ends with Clement promising that ‘he will entertain everyone with “the spirit of mirth”’, a reasonable assumption is ‘that the player of Cob is absent from the finale because he is making ready to provide this “spirit of mirth”’.¹⁶⁷ There is an

¹⁶⁵ Wiles, David, *Shakespeare’s Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p.43.

¹⁶⁶ Collins, Michael J., “*King Lear* (review)” in *Shakespeare Bulletin* 26:4 (2008) 92-8 (98).

¹⁶⁷ Wiles, p.54.

interesting parallel between *King Lear* in the Quarto text (where only Gloucester is offstage at the end) and *Much Ado About Nothing* – which also ends with all the actors except one on stage (in this case, the one playing Don John):

In the final lines, it is announced that John is under arrest in Messina, and that punishments will be devised for him. Ten principals are present for the final dance, leaving two groups of three to make a subsequent ‘curtain call’ of whatever kind – three villains and three agents of the law. The symmetry is suggestive. Some ludicrous punishment of ‘John’ may have eased the transformation of Kemp/Dogberry into Kemp the jig-maker.¹⁶⁸

David Wiles argues that the original Globe theatre owed its prosperity and success to its ability to attract ‘an audience from the prosperous west side of London’, and that, ‘in the circumstances, it can be no coincidence that the Globe never acquired a reputation for jigs’, but (even if this is true) this does not preclude Shakespeare composing an ending for the play that allowed for the play’s continuation and development through popular dance. Though the Folio’s *Exeunt with a dead march* might have suited the play’s ending at Court, in the houses of the nobility and, even, in the commercial playhouse (and it may well be that this stage direction is itself a product of the play’s performances in those more privileged venues), something very different might well have been required on tour and when performing in other more exposed and public spaces. As this chapter had argued, *King Lear* was not conceived wholly for performance on the Globe stage, Shakespeare was writing for numerous places and audiences – many of which may well have necessitated a concluding dance (rather than just a general *exeunt*). It is at least worth considering the implications of this, not only in relation to why Shakespeare has the bodies of Goneril and Regan brought on stage, but, more importantly, also in relation to why Gloucester (and possibly Edmund) are the only major characters off stage at the very end – characters

¹⁶⁸ Wiles, p.55.

whose re-entry on to the stage might initiate another narrative, and be part of another mode of performance (dance) that was an integral strand of early modern theatricality.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Considering the relationship between the texts, ensemble practices, common playing, an early modern performance of *King Lear* and dance opens up a wider set of possibilities for the play than are allowed for by an adherence to those discursive logics that convention authorises to 'secure the play's ultimate moral and aesthetic relevance' (not least when those relevances are deemed to reside solely in the Folio text).¹⁶⁹ For the early modern player, playing meant dancing as well as acting, and dances were performed not just at the end of a play but also (often) as part of its stage action, and many plays incorporate the language of dance into the dialogue (clearly expecting their audiences to recognize the subtleties and implications of this). In addition, many players were renowned dancers (and fencers); it is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the practices and logics of dance had at least some degree of congruency with the practices and logics of playing.¹⁷⁰ Ensemble playing on the early modern stage included and incorporated dance into a theatrical texture that naturally accommodated dance both as integral to the development of the action of a play and as a separate mode of performance to that which constituted the main action. In many ways, the practices of ensemble playing that are described in this chapter have more in common with choreographic approaches to space and staging than to conventional acting approaches, and allow for the development of a highly fluid medium in which 'meaning is in flux, in which possibility thrives, in which visions multiply'

¹⁶⁹ Turner, p.163.

¹⁷⁰ For further discussion and an exhaustive list of all references to dance in Shakespeare's plays, see Hoskins, Jim, *The Dances of Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

(Tim Etchells), a medium resistant to the controlling tendencies of those discursive logics that have provided us with our language for accounting for theatrical performance and defining its possibilities.¹⁷¹

Merce Cunningham notes how the language of much modern dance, its movements and sequences, has been significantly shaped by the proscenium arch (encouraging a frontal perspective and the production and privileging of a central fixed point in space around which other points are deemed to cohere).¹⁷² Taking Einstein's dictum that 'there are no fixed points in space', Cunningham's work has explored the different possibilities for dance when the performance space is opened up, set free of its assumed fixity to a central point, so that it is 'equal, and any place, occupied or not, [is] just as important as any other'.¹⁷³ Describing the resultant space as one in which 'movement can be continuous, and numerous transformations can be imagined', Cunningham describes a constantly fluid interplay between the performers, and between performers and spectators, that is productive of a constantly mutating and essentially multi-perspectival space – whose quality bears similarities to those produced by the collaborative and ensemble practices of the early modern playing companies:

The space could be constantly fluid, instead of being a fixed space in which movements relate. We've grown up with ideas about a fixed space in the theatre to which spectator and dancer refer. But if you abandon that idea you discover

¹⁷¹ For a description of some of the approaches taken to ensemble acting in the training of contemporary actors, see "Ensemble Acting Workshop: Group Movement as an Actor's Technique" in Dennis, Anne, *The Articulate Body: the Physical Training of the Actor* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995) pp.181-92.

¹⁷² Cunningham, Merce and Jacqueline Lesschaeve, "Torse: There are no Fixed Points in Space" in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. by Alexandra Carter (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) pp.29-34 (p.29).

¹⁷³ Carter, p.29.

another way of looking. You can see a person not just from the front but from any side with equal interest.¹⁷⁴

Russ McDonald acknowledges the difficulties for modern sensibilities of trying to come to terms with the notion of an early modern production of *Hamlet* ending with a rousing and energetic jig (especially when it included those who had played characters whose dead bodies had just previously been strewn across the stage). However, McDonald points to an early modern theatrical culture in which the purposes of playing were more diverse, and in which theatrical performance was less homogeneous in its aesthetic, social and cultural purposes:

Elizabethan audiences were evidently used to such contrarities, and Shakespeare exploited rather than suppressed them. His own subtle and even contradictory understanding of human experience prompted him to reconstruct and complicate the dramatic forms he inherited, to push the formal boundaries. This remaking of his medium to suit his meaning is probably the most powerful evidence of Shakespeare's artistic originality.¹⁷⁵

Multi-perspectival space that coheres not around a single point but around a common notion of its quality is the product of ensemble performance practices – whether the performers are dancers, actors or early modern player/dancers.

Just as there is no heath in *King Lear*, so there is no Dover Cliff – just the stage before an audience, and players whose primary purpose is not to evoke a fixed locale but to communicate the narrative and engage an heterogeneous audience in the production of dramatic spaces through 'character groupings and their movements [...] movements

¹⁷⁴ Carter, p.30.

¹⁷⁵ McDonald, Russ, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: an Introduction with Documents*, 2nd edition (Boston and New York: Bedford/St Martins', 2001) p.98.

[which] are *not* correlated with any sense of “place”¹⁷⁶. At the end of 4.1, Gloucester asks Edgar to take him to Dover where ‘there is a cliff whose high and bending head looks fearfully in the confined deep’ from whose ‘very brim [...] I shall no leading need’ (4.1.74-81). But the space he next enters (with Edgar) is a space that has been prepared for them by the intervening action and the relationships this has established between the stage, the characters and the audience. Since the two men set out on their journey to Dover, Albany has heard of Gloucester’s blinding and has sworn to avenge him (4.1.92-5), and the audience has just learnt from Regan’s conversation with Oswald that, wherever Gloucester goes ‘he moves all hearts against us’ (4.5.12-3). The space that one pair (Gloucester and Edgar) enter and intervene in is one that another (very different) pair (Regan and Oswald) have just vacated, and this may well be a more important factor in how the entrance of Edgar and Gloucester is experienced than how the stage evokes a sense of Dover Cliff – a place which is never named (except by editors keen to provide 4.6 with a location) and whose obvious non-existence in the world of the play is fundamental to the non-representational and self-conscious mode of theatricality at work here.

The playfulness of this section, in terms of its designation and manipulation of both the stage space and the space of the playhouse, relies for its effectiveness on a set of negotiations between competing notions of place. When the two men enter, the audience assumes that Gloucester is approaching the end of the journey he and Edgar set out on 225 lines earlier – and (as Gloucester and Edgar walk out through the tiring-room door) the audience realises that the end of that journey is the end of the stage itself. And it is

¹⁷⁶ Turner, p.182.

having reached this (final) liminal point that Edgar, no longer constrained wholly by the representational demands of moment, can adopt a different mode of performance and, looking first out at the galleries, then down into the groundlings beneath him, say with all honesty 'Come on, sir, here's the place. Stand still. How fearful and dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!' (4.11-2). Turner notes how this scene owes a debt to two-dimensional perspective painting, that it attempts to go beyond the constraints of a horizontal view by incorporating a vertical axis – citing Edgar's descriptions of objects as inherently small, creating 'an illusion of diminution' which produces not an 'expansive "space" but only individual places and objects'.¹⁷⁷ However, Turner's argument rests on an understanding of perspective as a matter of distance rather than of a spatiality in which viewer and viewed are conjoined (rather than separated).¹⁷⁸ It is true that Edgar's description of '[t]he crows and choughs [...] one that gathers samphire [...] fishermen that walk upon the beach [...] yon tall anchoring barque' (4.6.13-18) emphasises smallness, but to allow that fully to explain the language is to ignore the context in which this language is being spoken – and so fail to see its performative nature. Edgar is doing more than describing a scene (and considerably more than poetically attempting to evoke it): spoken from the edge of the platform stage in the middle of a purpose built playhouse, and before anything up to 3000 spectators, these lines (spoken within the narrative of the play for the blind Gloucester's benefit) within the terms of the theatre event are being spoken to and for an audience who are being directly appealed to and imbricated into a spatial texture that began when

¹⁷⁷ Turner, p.169.

¹⁷⁸ The roles and functions of perspective in the relationships between the spectator/viewer and the art work in Renaissance Europe are discussed in detail by Martin Kemp in both *Seen/ Unseen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.1-54 and *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunellechi to Seurat* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.5-52.

they saw Edgar leading his father towards them, and which developed from the point where Edgar came to 'th'extreme verge' (4.6.26) before setting his father at the same point – and then standing back.

Perspective, while purporting to represent space, produces its own space. Edgar's account of the view from the cliff-top is not simply a matter of description (an attempt to evoke a sense of perspective on a landscape that does not exist) but of using the playhouse and working the audience into the dynamics of performance in order to produce a particular quality of space. It is easy to forget that the two players entering after the exits of Regan and Oswald did so almost entirely surrounded by spectators – about one-third of whom would have been below their sightlines, the majority (the other two-thirds) above:

[T]he Elizabethan amphitheatre positioned its audience so that it rose like a sheer cliff wall. Consequently, even those who sat in the third gallery were not significantly farther away from the action than were their compatriots in the gallery below.¹⁷⁹

Edgar's lines delivered from the front edge of the platform stage created a spatial texture in which the appeal to those looking down at him from the galleries was different to the appeal to those looking up from the yard. For an audience who did not expect theatrical production to be a matter of wholly detached representation, and who expected to be involved as collaborators in a collective endeavour, Edgar's lines of description reinforced stage practices that helped construct complex sets of perspectives which the actor then used and exploited to serve the needs of the performance. As Ian Mackintosh reminds us, in any theatre space the experience of those spectators looking down on the actors is not

¹⁷⁹ Peat, Derek, "Looking Up and Looking Down: Shakespeare's Vertical Audience" in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35:5 (Special Issue: Teaching Shakespeare, 1984) 563-70 (p.564).

the same as the experience of those looking up at them.¹⁸⁰ For those spectators looking down from the upper gallery, Edgar looking up at them and saying ‘How fearful and dizzy ‘tis to cast one’s eyes so low!’ articulated back to them their own position in relation to the stage, effaced the (physical) distance between them and Edgar, and united them in a common perspective on the rest of the audience. Edgar’s ensuing lines bear the capacity to function like a camera, guiding the audience’s focus through the playhouse and onto groups of spectators, so that by the time he declares ‘It’s so high, I’ll look no more’ (4.6.22) he is, by throwing the focus out into the audience and gathering them together, able suddenly to pull the focus back onto himself and pick up the stage action.

In Barry Kyle’s 2001 Shakespeare Globe production of *King Lear* Gloucester’s fall onto the wooden boards of the platform stage had an ‘absurd quality’ to it that, without dispelling the appreciation of ‘its spiritual beauty as a symbolic act’, offered ‘a momentary apprehension of what perspective could never represent: a fissure in the fictional location through which we “grasp” a larger “spatial” dimension’.¹⁸¹ However, whatever its effect, its production was the consequence of ensemble practices – as Edgar deliberately removed himself from the kneeling Gloucester and produced Gloucester as the focus of the stage by mediating it onto him and aligning the audience in the production of that. Edgar’s ‘Why do I trifle thus with his despair?’ (4.6.33) spoken from one of the pillars, produced an expansive space in which the pathos of Gloucester’s isolation commingled with the thud of his body hitting the boards and the (almost comic) awareness of the

¹⁸⁰ MacKintosh, p.135.

¹⁸¹ Bessell, Jaq, *Shakespeare’s Globe Research Bulletin: King Lear* (London: Shakespeare’s Globe Education, 21 (May 2002) p.57, accessed online at < <http://globe-education.org/discovery-space/resource-library/document/777/research-bulletin-king-lear-2001> > [27 July 2009]. Turner, p.170.

artificiality (the absurdity) of the whole event. Edgar's movement and the thud of Gloucester's fall reveal the spatial capacity of an open stage dependent for its success on an ensemble approach to performance – in which the actors' abilities to generate complicity and to handle focus is deliberately calculated to benefit the audience by maximising their sense of involvement and pleasure in the stage action.

This chapter has shown how the flexible stage practices of modern ensemble companies work to produce evolving qualities of space sensitive and responsive to the localised conditions and contexts of performance. Fundamental to their construction is the actor's ability to include the audience in the work of spatial production – an audience whose complicity is engineered through the actors' construction and manipulation of focus and balance. For these modern companies, complicity and pleasure constitute primary modes of production, the experience of which intensifies the audience's encounter with the performance and their appreciation of its themes and ideas. Touring companies, especially, develop a tactical expertise in harnessing their places of performance to assist in the stage/audience dynamic. Complicity and pleasure are shown here to be spatial products, the tactical and ensemble nature of their production underpinned by flexible logics of practice that relate to an heterogeneous and multi-perspectival mode of theatre – the study of which opens up an alternative means by which Shakespeare's plays can be assessed in relation to their original and originating contexts of production and performance. If previous chapters have shown how early modern players could draw on a range of stage logics to assist them in the presentation of character and narrative, in contracting an audience into a performance intended to be experienced through

complicity and collaboration, this chapter, in demonstrating how the work and practices of modern touring and ensemble companies deploy similar logics and approaches, argues for a critical engagement with early modern theatrical performance practice that takes account of its ensemble and collaborative nature. Though conjectural, yet the interpretation of the *King Lear* Quarto text outlined above offers a plausible explanation of how the play related to a performance tradition and to stage practices in which the production of complicity and engagement were more significant factors than the production of either a sense of locale or a self-contained world for the play.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

When in Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* Sir Alexander Wengrave laments that his son 'that should be the column and main arch unto my house, the crutch unto my old age, becomes a whirlwind shaking the firm foundation' (1.2.113-16), the performance of these lines on the Fortune stage in 1610-11 did more than merely offer a poetic analogy for the ideal relationship between father and son; articulating a conception of the building as something solid and permanent, the line was reliant for its theatrical effect on its ability to draw on the audience's experiences of the Fortune (and other playhouses) as part of the rapid growth of urban and suburban London over the preceding decade.¹ If the anti-vagrancy legislation of the Tudor period indicates a growing anxiety about transgressive and tactical productions of social and cultural space (and attempted to counter this by imposing the conditions for the production of a more strategic and dominant/dominating spatiality), the burden of legislation issued during the first decade of the Stuart period indicates a set of anxieties focused not so much on illegitimate practices and spaces, but on the construction and constitution of legitimate places. Wengrave's appeal to the worthiness and reliability of stone is part of a distinctly Stuart perspective that, though still suspicious of the temporary spaces of appropriating practices, responded largely by attempting to control the fixity and permanence of places

¹ Middleton, Thomas and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* ed. by Paul A. Mulholland (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997). For a description of London's growth in the period see Brett-James, Norman G., *The Growth of Stuart London* (London: London & Middlesex Archaeology Society; George Allen & Unwin, 1935), pp.15-104.

rather than the practices through which places were used.² Ben Jonson's 1610 comedy *The Alchemist* (written for performance in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse) makes a similarly confident appeal to a knowledgeable London audience familiar with the urban, cultural and social landscape in which the Blackfriars was situated. However, unlike *The Roaring Girl*, *The Alchemist*, though it situates its audience as Blackfriars residents ('the full metatheatrical mirror makes the Blackfriars audience into a real audience of Blackfriars people, and the tricksters into the real actors of the Blackfriars playhouse') yet it does not appeal so directly to the arrangement of the playhouse building and imbricate this into its spatial texture as does *The Roaring Girl*.³ Whereas Jonson situates his play very clearly and openly in the liberty of Blackfriars, and holds the whole place (not simply the playhouse) up for scrutiny, Middleton and Dekker's appeal to their particular audience, in using the internal arrangement of the Fortune playhouse and weaving this into their performance, makes a more direct association between the Fortune stage and the auditorium.

By 1610, James I had overseen a raft of proclamations limiting the use of timber and ordering the use of brick in the construction of London's buildings – as a way of governing the spread of the city and limiting its appeal to immigrants (brick buildings being harder to divide into tenements, thereby limiting both the amount of accommodation the capital

² Paul Cefalu demonstrates how early modern 'anxieties over unauthorised movement and vagabondage' led to an increased tendency to export the urban poor to the colonies – thereby attempting to solve the problem of transgressive practices by excising it (rather than engaging with it), Cefalu, Paul A., "Re-thinking the Discourse of Colonialism in Economic Terms: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Captain John Smith's Virginia Narratives, and the English Response to Vagrancy" in *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000) 85-119 (pp.86-7) < <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=1&hid=7&sid=ca04a279-03a2-4530-a217-64abee88f08e%40sessionmgr9> > [accessed on 26 March 2009].

³ Gurr, Andrew, "Who is Lovewit? What is he?" in *Ben Jonson and Theatre: Performance, Practice and Theory*, ed. by Richard Cave and others (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp.5-19 (p.10).

could offer and the pace at which it could spread).⁴ Five years later, anxious for how he would be judged as monarch over 'the greatest or next the greatest citie of the Christian World', James declared:

As it was said of the first emperor of Rome, that he had found the city of Rome as brick and left it of marble, so Wee, whom God hath honoured to be the first of Britaine, might be able to say in same proportion, that we had found our Citie of stickes, and left them of bricke.⁵

Wengrave's anxiety is expressed in terms that relate the vulnerability of built places to the unpredictable and potentially destructive practices of those who inhabit, use or (like 'a whirlwind') pass through them. At the same time, he participates in the performance of a play that delights in the ambiguity of a playhouse whose architecture is pointed out and then playfully incorporated into the texture of performance. His first appearance in the play has Wengrave escorting his guests out of 'th'inner room [that] was too close' and into 'this parlour' (1.2.6-7) – playing on the openness of the platform stage and on the double meaning of parlour as both a room for private conversation and an apartment 'for conversations with people from the outside, or among the inmates'.⁶ Although the dialogue between Wengrave and his guests suggests a sense of location for the scene, the most significant spatial qualities of this for an original audience would have been bound up not in a sense of locale but in an encounter between players and spectators, stage and auditorium – an act of appropriation by players that drew on the internal architecture of the Fortune and imbricated this into a spatial texture that emanated from, but was not confined to, the platform stage:

⁴ Brett-James, pp.85-9.

⁵ Brett-James, p.90.

⁶ OED online at http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50171838?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=parlour&first=1&max_to_show=10 [accessed on 29 September 2009].

SIR ALEXANDER

Th'inner room was too close; how do you like
This parlour, gentlemen?

ALL

O passing well!

SIR ADAM

What a sweet breath the air casts here – so cool!

GOSHAWK

I like the prospect best.

LAXTON

See how 'tis furnished.

SIR DAVY

A very fair sweet room. (1.2.6-10)

These lines offer more than 'an impressionistic description of the Fortune Theatre', they suggest a quality of engagement between players and spectators, binding the two together in a common endeavour produced through the players' acknowledgement and creative uses of their place and moment of performance.⁷ Wengrave continues with a lengthy appeal that begins with the vertical audience ('Nay, when you look into my galleries – how bravely they are trimmed up – you all shall swear you're highly pleased to see what's set down there' (1.2.14-6)), and ends with those 'below, the very floor, as 'twere, waves to and fro, and, like a floating island, seems to move upon a sea bound in with shores above' (1.2.29-32). There was much room for humour here, as players pointed the audience out to themselves in a manner similar to that of the openings of *Everyman*, *Mankind* and *Fulgens and Lucrece* discussed in chapter 2 (and the interactions in *King Lear* between Gloucester, Edgar and the audience discussed in chapter 4). However, *The Roaring Girl* articulates an especially potent confidence in the capacity of a playhouse building to play a determining role in the production of the play's spaces of performance (again, unlike Jonson's *The Alchemist* where the appeal is a more generalised one to the

⁷ Middleton and Dekker, p.83 (fn.).

liberty of Blackfriars and its surrounding social and cultural environment). When, immediately following this dialogue, Wengrave's call for 'chairs, stools, and cushions' (1.2.46) leads to '*servants bring[-ing] on wine, chairs, etc*' (1.2.46SD), what was initially an appropriation of the auditorium (aimed at producing a sense of complicity and participation) becomes a more assertive act of domination of the building by the players – a domination that is used not to extend the world of the play out into the auditorium, but to harness the place to the play and to draw the world of which the play is part more significantly into the texture of performance. The men are eventually seated, the servants exit: as Wengrave and his guests look out from their chairs into the audience, Wengrave acknowledges 'Now here's a mess of friends' (1.2.59) – the men enjoying 'the prospect' as Wengrave takes the focus and uses it to tell the story of his wayward son to both onstage and offstage audiences.

Common playing, throughout the Tudor and Stuart periods, required players to produce creative spatial textures that acknowledged and drew on their physical and temporal contexts of production. The movement from the highly contractual openings of *Mankind*, *Everyman* and *Fulgens and Lucrece* noted in chapter 2 (with their direct appeals to their audiences and, especially in the case of *Fulgens and Lucrece*, to their broader social and cultural contexts of performance) to *The Roaring Girl's* assertive appeal to the internal architecture of the Fortune playhouse indicates a growing confidence in the platform stage's capacity for responding to and harnessing the (physical) place of performance to the (temporal) needs of dramatic production. **A** and **B** (*Fulgens and Lucrece*) pointed the audience out to themselves as an audience, and playfully exploited this to suggest that

they too were merely spectators, like them, waiting to see a play. Merrygreek expanded the stage/audience relationship of *Ralph Roister Doister* to produce the audience as the source of a focus which he then mediated onto Ralph – introducing a more nuanced relationship between the audience and the stage action (suggesting the development of a particularly sophisticated handling of dramatic focus). Although Titivillus (*Mankind*) offered a comic, mediated, perspective on Mankind, dramatic focus in this earlier play was still, by and large, more conventionally claimed and passed; by contrast, the dramatic effect of *Ralph Roister Doister* relied on the players' abilities to manipulate their temporal contexts of performance in order to claim, pass, share and mediate a focus productive of a constantly shifting and mutating texture of performance – different spaces coexisting in the same place, the open stage being deliberately exploited to create different possibilities for different characters.

Early modern anxieties concerning places and practices were not expressed solely in terms of hostile attitudes towards vagrancy and idleness; the fear of how interactions between people and places could lead to the production of transgressive spaces found its expression in the production of anti-vagrancy proclamations *and* a range of popular cultural products (pamphlets, plays and performances) that exposed and, to some extent, participated in and sustained the economies on which those interactions were dependent. In performance, plays such as *Mankind*, *Everyman*, *Fulgens and Lucrece* and *Ralph Roister Doister* all pleasurably turned the capacity for intervening in places and deflecting them from their intended uses to immediate theatrical advantage. Pre-dating modern concerns for a poetics of representation (a fixed sense of locale – time and place – for the action),

these plays are concerned for a fluid and elusive spatial texture responsive to its particular moments and contexts of performance. Running through these early plays (and into Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI* and *Twelfth Night*) is the sense that dramatic space was not perceived and defined by what was seen, rather by how it was encountered and experienced: a matter of use rather than observation, of practices rather than readings. The Simpcox scene from *2 Henry VI* demonstrates how theatrical space in the period was a temporal phenomenon, constructed in order subsequently to be intervened in and deflected by the stage action – one moment of space evolving into or being interrupted by another. *Twelfth Night*, in particular, exploits the fear of and fascination with transgressive productions of space; in its highly constructed moments of space, the play represents an intervention in a nexus of fears, anxieties, pleasures and perceptions – as it both stages cozenage and produces its own (implicating the audience as observers and participants in both).

The idea of dramatic space as something stable and quantifiable (i.e. the product of that which is observable) is made possible by predominantly readerly approaches to both written texts and theatrical stages. The differences between the 1608 Quarto and the 1623 Folio of *King Lear* are more than a matter of vocabulary; their difference in layout and presentation suggest a transition from a text as an indication of performance to a text designed for readers. Originally conceived for an established ensemble playing company, and for performance in a range of mainly borrowed locations, the 1608 Quarto of *King Lear* suggests a spatiality that has little to do with locale and much more to do with spatial quality and stage/audience dynamics. Modern ensemble approaches to Shakespeare

demonstrate a highly tactical disposition (which is not at all incompatible with their also having a strategic aim in terms of presenting and interpreting the play); flexible and responsive to their localised contexts of performance, such productions deliberately avail themselves of those elements that, in more self-contained and removed performances, would be regarded as interruptions or distractions – because they would fracture the self-contained world of the play. Yet, as Simon McBurney and others have shown, such moments far from deflecting a production from its intended path have the capacity to intensify the audience's experience and underscore the meanings they derive from the work. The stage practices underpinning ensemble approaches articulate and are informed by non-discursive logics that remain alert to the possibilities provided in the moment by the various contexts of performance. Aimed also at encouraging the audience's sense of complicity, these largely appropriating practices produce a space in which there is no easy division to be made between the world of the play and playing in the world: what ensemble stage logics aim for is a single space of performance that acknowledges its audience in its construction – a space in which the production of complicity and pleasure are as primary a mode of production as the communication of themes and ideas.

The problem of language has been alluded to on a number of occasions in this dissertation – the problem of translating primordial perception into language (the presence of language and the absence of which it speaks); of stage geographies/fixed points and stage movements/energies ('there are no fixed points in space'); of conventional interpretive discourses (with their privileging of observation and their downplaying of experience) and those discourses rooted in an encounter with theatre's physicality ('embodied ideas that

are in a dialectical relationship to the spoken word').⁸ Space is produced through the interactions between bodies and places (the practices through which bodies either conform to the logics of place or resist them), the perception of space is the primordial experience of it – rather than the attitudes and knowledge that perception subsequently informs. David Roberts notes that theatre criticism (by writing in the present tense) 'reaffirms the liveness of the live event by shifting the focus away from the performance and towards what it did for the scripting spectator: what matters is what it meant to be present', but his equating 'what it meant to be present' with that which presents itself to be scripted betrays a particularised and discursive approach to spectating.⁹ This may characterise the manner of engagement between spectator and performance taken by those who attended Milam Wilson's *Othello* with their copies of the playtext (whose focus on the written text suggests a similarly scriptural/scripting approach to the stage), but it fails to take into account the fact that the principle thing any spectator brings to a space is not their intellect (which always proceeds primordial perception) but themselves (their body). The embodied phenomenology of space underpinning this dissertation recognises a historicity in which 'I am not just a neutral vessel of signification; I am experiencing as well as representing'.¹⁰ Focusing on practices and perceptions enables this dissertation to argue for a notion of early modern dramatic space as the product of use (by both players and spectators) – it also provides a means for avoiding the philosophical pitfalls inherent in the production of discourses on observable space.

⁸ Murray, Simon and John Keefe, *Physical Theatres: an Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p.3.

⁹ Roberts, David, "Shakespeare, Theater Criticism, and the Acting Tradition" in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53:3 (Autumn 2002) 341-61 (p.349)

¹⁰ Pearson, Mike and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) p.16.

The architectural theorist Bernard Tschumi argues that ‘there is no architecture without violence’, that ‘architecture and events constantly transgress each other’s rules, whether explicitly or implicitly’.¹¹ The first statement is a reminder that the relationships between bodies and places are the product of an intense interaction between two different orders – of one (bodies) intruding into the other (places). By refusing to privilege observable space over action (for things and practices always exist in dynamic relationship) Tschumi asserts that to qualify a space by its ‘thingness’ (its formal and measurable properties) is to divorce it from the human practices through which it is used and acquires meaning. The second assertion points to two different, complementary and contradictory logics at work in the operation of spaces and the experiences that define them: the logic of built space is not the same as the logic of human practices (places follow one logic, events another). Though the move from borrowed, appropriated places to purpose-built, fixed and dedicated playhouses represents a move from silent obscurity to the realm of public discourse, common playing in the period was still largely an itinerant profession dependent on touring and performances outside the playhouses for its sustenance. This dissertation argues that common to playing in both borrowed sites and purpose-built playhouses involved a fundamentally tactical disposition through which players harnessed the place and contexts of performance to serve theirs and their audience’s immediate theatrical needs. The logic of bodies intruding in the logic of places was a matter of players appropriating their place of performance (wherever and whenever it was) and turning it into the experiential site of dramatic production.

¹¹ Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: The MIT Press, 1996) pp.121 & 132.

Discursive approaches to Shakespeare and early modern performance go by what is present, rather than by accounting for absence. Roberts shows how the discourses of theatre criticism frame the ways by which theatre (and Shakespeare) is viewed and received, but also how such approaches are neither impartial nor (necessarily) benign – they define the terms of an engagement that negotiates ‘between the actual present and the historical present in the interests of keeping alive traditions of performance’.¹² The tendency to focus on the narrow contexts of an historical past through its re-inscription as text blinds us to the broader contexts that have helped to shape it, and the discourses through which that past is constructed in the present – discursive knowledge coming not only to shape our construction of the past, but to constitute it. Holland’s criticisms of Shakespeare in performance are representative of a tendency to read the stage for its symbols and significances, looking for that legitimate coherence that presents itself to the ‘scripting spectator’. However, Ubersfeld reminds us that the pleasure (sic) of the spectator is precisely not in that which is present but in an absence – a longing, a sense that we could have experienced things differently, that the possibilities of performance were not exhausted by our perception and conception of it. Discursive readings of the stage will necessarily privilege that which presents itself to the eye, and see the logic that that communicates as the stage’s primary mode of production.

However, as this dissertation has shown in relation to modern ensemble productions of Shakespeare that take a collaborative approach to performance, although scripting critics may not acknowledge the significances of their embodied encounters with particular

¹² Roberts, p.360.

performances (except when these get in the way of their ability to enjoy a detached appreciation of the stage), for many practitioners (actors and directors) as for many spectators, the experience of an embodied encounter is a significant factor in their appreciation of a performance. Perhaps, for a scripting spectator, the significances of dramatic performance are heightened by its capacity to generate a 'powerful emotional and intellectual force'; however, this dissertation argues from the evidence of modern ensemble playing that common playing in the early modern period was a matter of intensifying audience experience through engaging with its contexts of performance and incorporating these into the texture of performance.¹³ The experience of early modern drama was spatially produced, a matter of players harnessing their (physical) places and contexts of performance to the (temporal) needs of the moment. Audiences were not only made to feel complicit in the production of early modern dramatic space, their participation in the spaces of performance were determined by stage logics that took account of their role and position in relation to the dramatic action.

Robert Weimann argues that the power and potency of the *locus* came from its singular capacity for separating itself from the material world of performance.¹⁴ However, this dissertation shows how stage focus was frequently mediated by practices that aligned the audience in a critical perspective on the action – so that the *locus*, far from being removed from the world of which the performance was part, drew on that world and incorporated it into the audience's experience of the stage action. Breaking the self-contained world of

¹³ Holland, Peter, *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English stage in the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.39.

¹⁴ Weimann, Robert, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.184.

the *locus* did not necessarily mean diminishing the potency and effectiveness of its dramatic representations. The interactions between Edgar and the audience described in chapter 4 bear the capacity for much humour – which is not at all incompatible with the tragedy of the scene, only with modern conceptions of tragedy (a consequence of our tendency to set it at a distance). The critic who objected to Mark Rylance’s injection of humour into the character of Richard II denotes an assumption that such characters are there to be observed, the spectator’s empathies to be aroused through detachment.¹⁵ Of course, it is not humour (a concept) that the critic objects to, it is laughter (an action, activity, a response to something). Laughter is incompatible with intellectualised (and therefore) privileged expectations of tragedy, because it locates the stage/audience dynamics in a transactional exchange that, if it does not unify the space of the stage and the auditorium, effaces the distance between them. Laughter is complex, and by no means incompatible with tragedy, sadness or horror:

We’re too precious about empathy in the theatre. It’s far more robust than we think. It’s perfectly possible to be dripping with pity, then to laugh at a crude joke and finally to return to an image of even greater despair than we had before.¹⁶

Edgar’s playful interaction with the audience far from diminishing the dramatic power of Gloucester’s fall has the potential to strengthen it. The transactional exchanges that lie central to Edgar’s playfulness with the audience is precisely that which binds them together in a common endeavour; effacing the distance between them, it effects a relationship capable of heightening the sense of pity at Gloucester’s pathetic fall. Any laughter that precedes Gloucester’s fall, brought about by Edgar’s playful engagement

¹⁵ Wright, John, *Why is that so Funny? A Practical Exploration of Physical Comedy* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2006), p.xiii.

¹⁶ Wright, p.11.

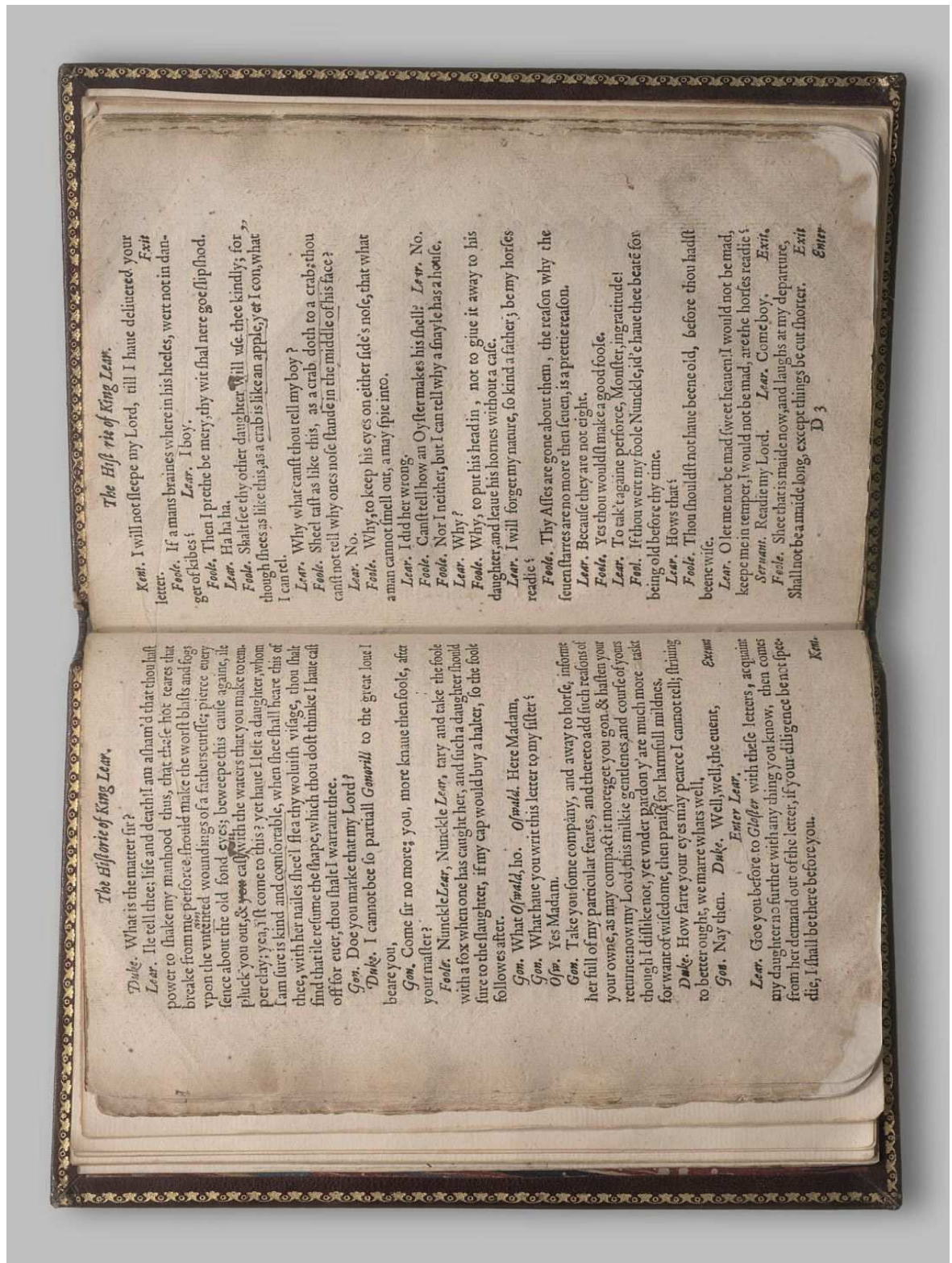
with the audience, strips the fall, when it comes, of any tendency to induce false sentimentality and pompous moralizing:

Both tragedy and laughter, [Bakhtin] comments, strive to expel fear from change and catastrophe; but the former does this by a kind of 'serious courage, remaining in the zone of individuality', whereas laughter responds to change with 'joy and abuse [...] Tragedy and laughter equally fearlessly look being in the eye, they do not construct any sort of illusions, they are sober and exacting'.¹⁷

This dissertation has shown how modern discursive assumptions about the practices and purposes of theatrical production sustain and authorise an interpretive mode that privileges observation and the forms of knowledge that is derived (and is derivable) from this. However, the story of space presented here, with its focus on space as a matter of production and encounter, offers an alternative approach to understanding the experience of early modern drama. The common player worked as a member of an ensemble company, and this dissertation argues that a significant purpose of their playing was the appropriation of a host site and the contracting of an audience who expected to be involved as collaborators in the process of production. Fundamentally tactical in nature, the practices of common playing exploited the possibilities and potentialities offered by the localised and temporal contexts of performance – whether in a purpose-built and familiar playhouse, at Court or on tour. As a mediation with the past, this dissertation attempts to re-imagine and re-contextualise the spaces produced through this exploitation – the practices and experiences of modern ensemble approaches to the performance of Shakespeare's plays offering an awareness of the role of practices in the production of dramatic space and the generation of meanings this affords.

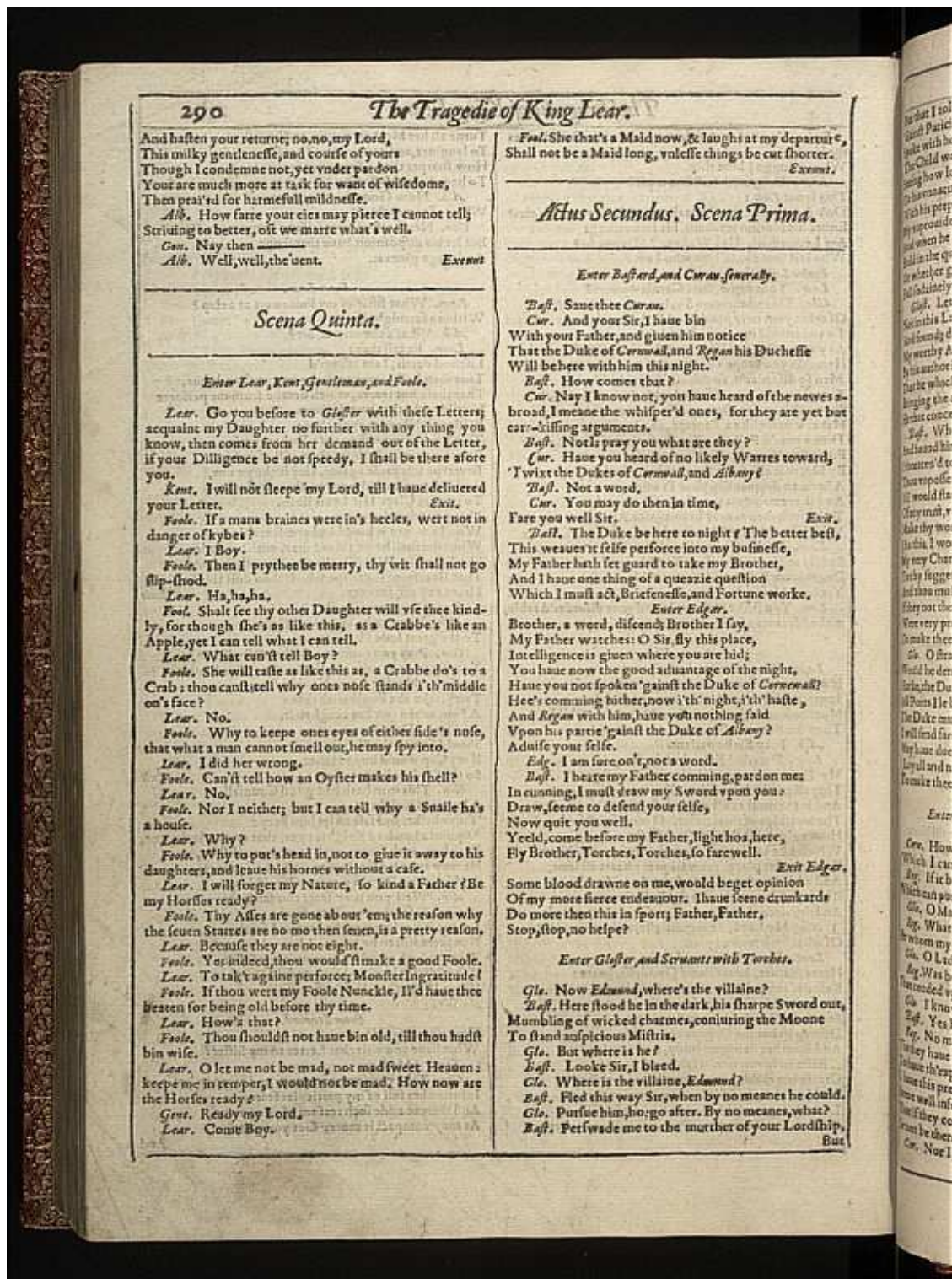
¹⁷ Eagleton, Terry, *Sweet Violence: the Idea of the Tragic*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p.185.

Appendix 1: King Lear (1608 Quarto Text)



<http://molcat1.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/pagemax.asp?Page=20&vol=1&strCopy=25&strResize=no&disp=s> [accessed on 11 October 2008]

Appendix 2: King Lear (1623 Folio Text)



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The Tragedie of King Lear.

And hasten your returne; no, no, my Lord,
This milky gentlenesse, and course of yours
Though I condemne not, yet vnder pardon
You are much more at task for want of wisdoms,
Then prai'd for harmefull mildnesse.
Alb. How farre your cits may pierce I cannot tell;
Striving to better, oft we marre what's well.
Cor. Nay then ———
Alb. Well, well, the' vent.

Exeunt

Scena Quinta.

Enter Lear, Kent, Gentlemen, and Foole.

Lear. Go you before to *Gloucester* with these Letters;
acquaint my Daughter no further with any thing you
know, then comes from her demand out of the Letter,
if your Diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore
you.

Kent. I will not sleepe my Lord, till I haue deliuered
your Letter.

Exit.

Foole. If a mans braines were in's heeles, wert not in
danger of kybes?

Lear. I Boy.

Foole. Then I prythee be merry, thy wit shall not go
slip-thod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha.

Foole. Shalt see thy other Daughter will vse thee kindly,
for though she's as like this, as a Crabbe's like an
Apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. What can't tell Boy?

Foole. She will taste as like this as, a Crabbe do's to a
Crab: thou canst tell why ones nose stands i'th' middle
on's face?

Lear. No.

Foole. Why to keepe ones eyes of either side's nose,
that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong.

Foole. Can't tell how an Oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Foole. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a Snail ha's
a house.

Lear. Why?

Foole. Why to put's head in, not to giue it away to his
daughters, and leaue his hornes without a case.

Lear. I will forget my Nature, so kind a Father? Be
my Horse ready?

Foole. Thy Ases are gone about 'em; the reason why
the seven Starres are no mo then seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight.

Foole. Yes indeed, thou wouldst make a good Foole.

Lear. To talke like perforce; Monster Ingratitude!

Foole. If thou wert my Foole Nunckle, I'd haue thee
beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Foole. Thou shouldst not haue bin old, till thou hadst
bin wife.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad sweet Heaven:
keepe me in temper, I would not be mad. How now are
the Horses ready?

Gent. Ready my Lord.

Lear. Come Boy.

Foole. She that's a Maid now, & laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a Maid long, vnlesse things be cut shorter.

Exeunt.

Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.

Enter Bassard, and Curaw, Generall.

Bass. Save thee *Curaw*.

Cur. And your Sir, I haue bin
With your Father, and giuen him notice
That the Duke of *Cornwall*, and *Regan* his Duchesse
Will be here with him this night.

Bass. How comes that?

Cur. Nay I know not, you haue heard of the newes a-
broad, I meane the whisper'd ones, for they are yet but
con-kissing arguments.

Bass. Not! pray you what are they?

Cur. Haue you heard of no likely Warres toward,
'Twixt the Dukes of *Cornwall*, and *Albany*?

Bass. Not a word.

Cur. You may do then in time,
Fare you well Sir.

Exit.

Bass. The Duke be here to night & The better best,
This weanes it selfe perforce into my businesse,
My Father hath set guard to take my Brother,
And I haue one thing of a queasie question
Which I must act, Briefenesse, and Fortune worke.

Enter Edgar.

Brother, a word, discend; Brother I say,
My Father watches: O Sir fly this place,
Intelligence is giuen where you are hid;
You haue now the good aduantage of the night,
Haue you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of *Cornwall*?
Hee's comming hither, now i'th' night, i'th' haste,
And *Regan* with him, haue you nothing said
Vpon his partie 'gainst the Duke of *Albany*?
Adulfe your selfe.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Bass. I heare my Father comming, pardon mee;
In cunning, I must draw my Sword vpon you:
Draw, seeme to defend your selfe,
Now quit you well.

Yecid, come before my Father, light hos, here,
Fly Brother, Torches, Torches, so farewell.

Exit Edgar.

Some blood drawne on me, would beget opinion
Of my more fierce endeavour. I haue scene drunkards
Do more then this in sport; Father, Father,
Stop, stop, no helpe?

Enter Gloucester and Seruants with Torches.

Glo. Now *Edmond*, where's the villaine?

Bass. Here stood he in the dark, his sharpe Sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charmes, coniuring the Moone
To stand asuspicious Mistres.

Glo. But where is he?

Bass. Looke Sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villaine, *Edmond*?

Bass. Fled this way Sir, when by no meanes he could.

Glo. Pursue him, ho; go after. By no meanes, what?

Bass. Petswade me to the murder of your Lordship,

But

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